

The Gaullists and North Africa:
1951-1958

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to study the development of the Gaullist movement's views on the situation in French North Africa – Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria – in the period between the elections of June 1951 and Charles de Gaulle's return to power following the revolt of May 1958 in Algeria. It seeks to emphasise the activities of Gaullists in parliament and in government, as well as those of regional Gaullist activists, rather than focusing closely on the work of de Gaulle himself. It is based on Gaullist party archives, politicians' private papers, and the extensive Gaullist press, as well as parliamentary papers and diplomatic documents. It seeks to establish the range of Gaullist views on the North African problems before their return to power, in the light of the fact that it was the crisis in North Africa that brought about the Gaullists' return to government. In addition, the thesis demonstrates the extent of divisions among Gaullists during the Fourth Republic, providing a close analysis of Gaullist thought in this often-neglected period, with special reference to colonial and international questions.

The first chapter, after providing an overview of the state of scholarship on Gaullism and decolonisation in French North Africa, attempts to define and clarify notions of Gaullism, and introduces the most important Gaullist figures whose views and behaviour will be examined in the rest of the thesis. The second chapter discusses the most important themes associated with Gaullism in the early years of the Fourth Republic, demonstrating the origins of many of the ideas and principles that were to shape Gaullist thinking on North Africa in the period 1951-58.

The third chapter deals with Gaullist responses to the unrest in Morocco and Tunisia in 1951-54, at a time when increasing nationalist activity forced the question of the Protectorates' future onto the French political agenda. Chapters four and five set the issue in wider context, concentrating on other important developments that influenced the Gaullists' opinions on North Africa. The fourth chapter describes the Gaullists' opposition to the

European Defence Community plan in 1952-54, emphasising the role that prioritisation of North Africa played in their opposition to European integration. The fifth chapter describes Gaullists' reactions to the French defeat in Indochina in 1954, in terms of its effect on their views of the importance of North Africa for France's influence, prestige and security.

Chapters six and seven describe Gaullist responses to government attempts to introduce reform in North Africa. The sixth chapter focuses on the Gaullists' opposition to government proposals to devolve power to Morocco and Tunisia, with a view to their independence. The seventh chapter examines the first fifteen months of the war in Algeria, from November 1954 to February 1956. It shows how Gaullists lost faith in successive governments' ability to solve the Algerian problem, and it traces the emergence of the idea that this crisis was seriously weakening France both domestically and internationally. In addition, it focuses on the divisions that emerged within Gaullism in response to colonial problems. This chapter also studies in detail one of the most important Gaullists in terms of the North African crisis, Jacques Soustelle, analysing his role in the development of Gaullist views.

The eighth chapter deals with the Gaullists' responses to the deepening crisis in North Africa, between Moroccan and Tunisian independence in March 1956 and the end of the Fourth Republic in May 1958. It looks, in particular, at the international dimension of the Algerian crisis as seen by Gaullists, and includes detailed study of another key Gaullist thinker and activist, Michel Debré. Chapter nine attempts to identify the Gaullists' involvement in the revolt of May 1958 in Algiers, by examining their contacts with the leaders of the military revolt against the government and with settler politicians in Algiers. It seeks to determine how the Gaullists succeeded in persuading traditionally antigaullist groups that de Gaulle would be able to guarantee the maintenance of French Algeria, and raises questions of the future divisions that the events of May 1958 caused.

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I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACUF	<i>Anciens combattants de l'Union française</i>
ALN	<i>Armée de Libération Nationale</i>
ARS	<i>Action Républicaine et Sociale</i>
CEA	<i>Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique</i>
CNIP	<i>Confédération des Indépendants et des Paysans</i>
EDC	European Defence Community (also CED: <i>Communauté Européenne de Défense</i>)
FLN	<i>Front de Libération Nationale</i>
IHEDN	<i>Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Défense Nationale</i>
MRP	<i>Mouvement Républicain Populaire</i>
MTLD	<i>Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques</i>
OAS	<i>Organisation Armée Secrète</i>
OCRS	<i>Organisation commune des régions sahariennes</i>
PCF	<i>Parti Communiste Français</i>
RFDS	<i>Rassemblement Français Démocratique et Social</i>
RPF	<i>Rassemblement du Peuple Français</i>
RS	<i>Centre National des Républicains Sociaux</i>
SAS	<i>Sections administratives spécialisées</i>
SFIO	<i>Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière</i>
UDSR	<i>Union Démocratique et Social de la Résistance</i>
URAS	<i>Union des Républicains d'Action Sociale</i> (also known as <i>Union Républicaine d'Action Sociale</i>)
USRAF	<i>Union pour le salut et le renouveau de l'Algérie française</i>

References

References to *Journal Officiel de la République Française* will be abbreviated to *JORF*

References to *Assemblée Nationale* will be abbreviated to *AN*

References to *Conseil de la République* will be abbreviated to *CR*

References to *Documents Diplomatiques Français* will be abbreviated to *DDF*

CHAPTER 1

Review of literature and sources

The literature on the subject of Charles de Gaulle in general is vast.¹ In addition to historical studies, the General has been the subject of much attention from political science, which has frequently sought to place his political principles within the broader context of recurring themes in French political history.² However, relatively little attention has been paid to the period between de Gaulle's departure from office in 1946 and his return in 1958, the so-called 'traversée du désert.' Indeed, the Gaullist political movements of this period have been neglected in the general studies of Gaullism, which have tended to concentrate on the Second World War and the Liberation era, and on the Fifth Republic. The principal works on the Fourth Republic period are those by Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'Opposition*, and Purtschet, *Le Rassemblement du Peuple Français*.³ Both of these works deal extensively with the organisation of the RPF and its activities within France; they have less to say, however, about the evolution of Gaullist *policy* as opposed to the life of the movement, and both are virtually silent on the question of Gaullism's attitudes to colonial questions at the time of the RPF. In addition to the above-mentioned works by Charlot and Purtschet, the only substantial work of note on the RPF is the

¹ Among the most useful biographies of de Gaulle are: J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle, vol. 2: le politique 1944-1959* (Paris: Seuil, 1985); C. Cogan, *Charles de Gaulle: A brief biography with documents* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1996); J. Jackson, *Charles de Gaulle* (London: Cardinal, 1990); C. Williams, *The Last Great Frenchman: A life of Charles de Gaulle* (London: Little, Brown, 1993); J.P. Rioux, *De Gaulle: La France à vif* (Paris: Liana Levi, 2000); P.M. de la Gorce, *De Gaulle entre deux mondes* (Paris: Fayard, 1964). The total number of works on Gaullism now numbers over 2000, according to Institut Charles de Gaulle, *Nouvelle bibliographie internationale sur Charles de Gaulle* (Paris: Plon, 1990).

² See for example P. Cerny, *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological aspects of de Gaulle's foreign policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); J. Charlot, *Le Phénomène gaulliste* (Paris: Fayard, 1970); J-C. Petitfils, *Le Gaullisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1981); J. Touchard, *Le Gaullisme, 1940-1969* (Paris: Seuil, 1978); N. Tenzer, *La Face cachée du gaullisme* (Paris: Hachette, 1998); S. Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³ J. Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'opposition* (Paris: Fayard, 1983); C. Purtschet, *Le Rassemblement du Peuple Français* (Paris, Editions Cujas, 1965); A. Hartley, *Gaullism: The Rise and Fall of a Political movement* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972). S. Bernstein, *Histoire du gaullisme* (Paris: Perrin, 2001) devotes more space than many other histories of Gaullism to the Fourth Republic, but does not specifically address colonial policy.

collection of articles published in 1997 by the Fondation Charles de Gaulle, entitled *De Gaulle et le RPF 1947-1955*.⁴ It, too, provides a detailed account of the internal life of the movement but deals only briefly with colonial and foreign policy questions.⁵ The RPF is of course mentioned in general works on Gaullism and on Fourth Republic politics, but such work has tended to focus on its presumed role as a vehicle for the spread of de Gaulle's ideas, at the expense of analysis of the movement as a political movement with its own internal trends of opinion and policy-making processes. This somewhat cursory treatment of the RPF surely owes much to de Gaulle's own attempts to minimise its importance to his career; the Rassemblement famously only occupies one paragraph in his memoirs.⁶ The other Gaullist movements of the Fourth Republic have received even less attention than the RPF, frequently being overlooked by general histories of the period or of Gaullism. The groups of RPF deputies who formed, in 1952, the *Action Républicaine et Sociale* (ARS) as a sub-group within the RPF and, in 1953, the *Union Républicaine d'Action Sociale* (URAS) have not been treated as representative of a distinct tendency within Gaullism, despite the fact that several of the most influential Gaullist thinkers can be found within these short-lived groups.⁷ Likewise, the *Centre National des*

⁴Fondation Charles de Gaulle/Université de Bordeaux III, *De Gaulle et le Rassemblement du Peuple Français (1947-1955)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1998).

⁵ The three chapters on colonial affairs that do appear in this collection deal only with Indochina (F. Turpin, 'Le RPF et la guerre d'Indochine', pp. 530-40 and 'Le RPF en Indochine', pp. 280-9) and Equatorial Africa (P. Bas, 'Le RPF en AEF (1949-1951)', pp. 289-94), while a general introduction to the theme of the RPF and the *Union Française* (G. Pervillé, 'Le RPF et l'Union Française: Rapport de synthèse', pp. 521-9) is limited to general remarks about the place of the colonies in de Gaulle's worldview. The chapters on foreign and defence policy (J-P. Bled, 'Le Général de Gaulle, le RPF et la politique étrangère: rapport de synthèse', pp. 563-69; C. d'Abzac-Epezy, 'Le RPF et les questions de défense', pp. 569-84) too, do not refer to the role played by colonial questions in the development of Gaullist thinking on international affairs.

⁶ Gaulle, Charles de, *Mémoires d'Espoir: le renouveau 1958-1962* (Paris: Plon, 1996), pp. 22-3

⁷ The ARS was formed in 1952 by twenty-seven Gaullists expelled from the parliamentary RPF for voting the investiture as Prime Minister of Antoine Pinay, in contravention of the RPF's policy of not according its support to any Fourth Republic government. Its leading figure was Henri Frédéric-Dupont. It consisted mainly of deputies who might be described as members of the traditional conservative Right. The URAS was formed in 1953, after de Gaulle had brought the parliamentary existence of the RPF to an end. Its members included most of the RPF deputies, led by a 'Comité d'initiative et d'organisation' composed of Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Francis Le Basser and Georges Oudard. Its members were mostly new to politics in 1945, and might be said to represent more of a centrist tendency. The ARS provided five government ministers in 1952-53, while the URAS were rarely absent from government after 1954. D. Macrae, *Parliament, Parties and Society in France*,

Républicains Sociaux (generally shortened to *Républicains Sociaux* (RS)), created in January 1954 and to all intents and purposes the successor to the RPF after the *Rassemblement* was brought to an end in 1955,⁸ has only rarely been studied in detail, with only two monographs devoted to it, the more recent in 1980.⁹ The neglect of the RS is perhaps understandable given the movement's spectacular lack of success in the 1956 elections, and the fact that it was never able to claim that it spoke for the entire Gaullist movement, as some prominent Gaullists appeared to show only a nominal commitment to the movement and, most importantly, it never received de Gaulle's unequivocal public support. Yet, for the years between 1956 and 1958, the RS is the closest approximation of a Gaullist movement that can be identified, and its conferences and publications represent the clearest public expression of Gaullism during the two years before de Gaulle's return to power in May 1958.

Although general works on Gaullism and de Gaulle abound, few deal with the Fourth Republic in detail and even fewer address colonial and international questions in this period. On the subject of the present study – Gaullism and North Africa – only one detailed work based on archival sources is available, Fabrice Barthélémy's *mémoire de maîtrise* of 1997 entitled *Le Gaullisme et l'Algérie au temps du RPF, 1947-1955*.¹⁰ This work, though based on RPF archives, is of necessity brief, and deals with the question of RPF organisation in Algeria rather than the movement's policy on the future of the territory. Furthermore, Barthélémy does not consider the Algerian

1946-1958 (New York & London: St. Martin's Press/Macmillan, 1967), pp. 141-2; Purtschet, *Le RPF*, pp. 359-69.

⁸ The RPF, although effectively ended by de Gaulle on June 30 1955, was never actually dissolved. Its administrative structures remained in place under General Secretary Jacques Foccart and played a part in maintaining a Gaullist party organisation at local level that could be reactivated in 1958 and in the early years of the Fifth Republic. The RPF also continued to produce one publication after 1955, the *Lettre à l'Union Française*.

⁹ M-F. Chevrillon, 'Les Républicains Sociaux ou la traversée du désert', (unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1965); H. J. Tümmers, *Das 'Centre National des Républicains Sociaux': Eine Gaullistische Partei unter der IV. Republik*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universität Augsburg, 1980)

¹⁰ F. Barthélémy, *Le Gaullisme et l'Algérie au temps du RPF, 1947-1955*, (unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1997). Also of use is Institut Charles de Gaulle, *Brazzaville janvier-février 1944: aux sources de la décolonisation* (Paris: Plon, 1988)

question in terms of its wider implications for or connections with Gaullist policy on other matters, nor does he find space for consideration of the views of Gaullists as expressed outside the formal structures of RPF activities, such as press articles, speeches in parliament or co-operation with other political or lobbying groups. The chief usefulness of Barthélémy's research, therefore, consists in its portrayal of Gaullist activity in Algeria in the early Fourth Republic and of the slow evolution of Gaullist policy as revealed by the 'official' sources such as RPF conference reports. Other than this work on Algeria, the body of secondary work on Gaullism and North Africa available to researchers consists of summaries in general works on Gaullism or on decolonisation, which tend to place the emphasis on the declarations of de Gaulle himself on the subject.¹¹

Histories of the crisis in French North Africa in the 1950s include some discussion of the Gaullists' position where this is relevant to French government policy, such as Christian Fouchet's spell as Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs (1954-55), Gilbert Grandval's brief governorship in Morocco (July-August 1955), Jacques Soustelle's period as governor-general in Algeria (1955-6) and General Georges Catroux's nomination to and rapid resignation from the same post in February 1956. Yet histories of the North African problems of this period cannot devote significant attention to the policies of a political group that, through its reluctance to participate in government, had little direct effect on the government policy that such works examine. Similarly, general work on Fourth Republic foreign policy makes little reference to the views of the Gaullists, whose role in the elaboration and discussion of government policy was limited to that of a constant voice of opposition in parliament, most importantly at the time of the European Defence Community (EDC) affair of 1952-54. Furthermore, colonial and foreign policy questions have generally been treated as separate during the Fourth Republic, with only one study, Aimaq's *For Europe or Empire*, attempting to demonstrate the close link between

¹¹ See notes 1&2 above.

French colonial interests and the formulation of policy on other matters of international concern.¹² Aimaq's thesis – that the French government's opposition to EDC and resistance to American influence in Europe were determined largely by colonial preoccupations – provides a valuable interpretative framework in which to examine the influence of the North African question on Gaullist international and defence policy. It must be noted, however, that *For Europe or Empire* is a study of French government attitudes and as such includes very few references to Gaullism. Only one monograph on any aspect of Fourth Republic Gaullist foreign policy exists, Manin's *Le Rassemblement du Peuple Français et les problèmes européens*,¹³ and its focus on Europe places it on the periphery of this study's field of interest. The theme of general RPF attitudes to international affairs has been addressed by Jean-Paul Brunet,¹⁴ who argues that the RPF's conception of how the principle of *grandeur* could be applied relied heavily on the development of Algeria, which would in turn allow France to maintain great power status and challenge American influence in Europe. The importance for the Gaullists of achieving *puissance* and *grandeur*, as highlighted by Brunet and by other, more general, studies of Gaullism's attitudes to foreign affairs, will be examined in this thesis as an underlying principle that guided Gaullist policy towards North Africa.¹⁵

If the Gaullists were little more than peripheral figures in the elaboration of most of the Fourth Republic's policies, one area in which they might be said to have exerted more direct influence is military affairs. Three Gaullists – Pierre Billotte, Pierre Koenig and Jacques Chaban-Delmas – held the office of Minister of Defence, while others were instrumental in the beginnings of the French nuclear programme that was

¹² J. Aimaq, *For Europe or Empire: French Colonial Ambitions and the European Army Plan* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1996)

¹³ P. Manin, *Le Rassemblement du Peuple Français et les problèmes européens* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966)

¹⁴ J.-P. Brunet, 'Le RPF et l'idée de puissance nationale (1945-1948)', in *La Puissance française en question (1945-1949)*, ed. by R. Girault & R. Frank (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), pp. 362-84

¹⁵ On the themes of *grandeur* and *puissance* see Cerny, *Politics of Grandeur* and M. Vaïsse, *La Grandeur: politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle 1958-1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998)

to become a key aspect of de Gaulle's policy during the Fifth Republic. Consequently, general secondary work on the military history of the Fourth Republic tends to be more useful to the observer of Gaullism during that period than is the case for histories of foreign policy. The recent collection of essays entitled *Militaires en République 1870-1962* contains valuable pieces on Pierre Koenig's defence ministry, on the beginnings of the nuclear programme, and on the extent of military support for the RPF.¹⁶ On the military question alone, general works dealing with the genesis of the *force de frappe* during the Fourth Republic demonstrate the extent of Gaullist involvement and reveal both the importance that certain Gaullists attached to the military programme as part of their vision for France's future and the relatively minor role that nuclear questions, so important in the Fifth Republic, played in Fourth Republic Gaullism.¹⁷ The involvement of Gaullists in military policy under the Fourth Republic has also been evoked in general studies of the armed forces during this period, focussing especially on civil-military relations and the appeal of Gaullism to disillusioned officers. While much of the work available on this subject was completed before the opening of military archives, it nevertheless remains useful as an indication of the contemporary perception of Gaullists and discontented military figures as potential allies, an impression that played an important role in the period leading up to the return of de Gaulle in 1958.¹⁸ Memoirs of former military

¹⁶ O. Forcade, E. Duhamel & P. Vial, (eds.) *Militaires en République 1870-1962: les officiers, le pouvoir et la vie publique*, (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999) - especially D. Mongin, 'Le rôle des militaires dans le choix de l'arme atomique avant 1958', pp. 89-97; P. Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal, le général Koenig (19 juin/14 août 1954 - 23 février/ 6 octobre 1955)', pp. 255-89; B. Lachaise, 'Les Militaires et le gaullisme au temps du Rassemblement du Peuple Français', pp. 455-65.

¹⁷ W. Kohl, *French Nuclear Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971); W. Mendl, *Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, 1945-1969* (New York & Washington: Praeger, 1970); W. Mendl, 'The Background of French Nuclear Policy', *International Affairs*, 41 (1965), pp. 22-36; D. Mongin, *La Bombe atomique française 1945-1958* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1997); Institut Charles de Gaulle/Université de Franche-Comté, *L'Aventure de la bombe: De Gaulle et la dissuasion nucléaire (1958-1969)* (Paris: Plon, 1985)

¹⁸ The most useful works on the French armed forces in the period covered by the present study are: P.M. de la Gorce, *La République et son armée* (Paris: Fayard, 1963); R. Maran, *Torture: The Role of Ideology in the French-Algerian War* (New York & London: Praeger, 1989); D. Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria: The analysis of a political and military doctrine* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964); J.S. Ambler, *The French Army in Politics, 1945-1962* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966); G. Kelly, *Lost Soldiers: The French Army and Empire in Crisis, 1947-1962* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965); O. Menard, *The Army and the Fifth Republic* (Lincoln:

figures, many of whom quickly distanced themselves from Gaullism once Algerian independence began to seem inevitable,¹⁹ are in this respect valuable sources for a study of the appeal of Fourth Republic Gaullism in the context of colonial questions, and they demonstrate the importance, for a study of Gaullism and colonial questions, of devoting sufficient attention to the military aspect of the subject.

The chronological and geographical focus of this study - North Africa during the Fourth Republic - has, like Gaullism, received considerable general coverage. As is the case for Fourth Republic politics, however, the Gaullists tend to occupy only a small part of the available works. Histories of political life in the North African colonies treat the settler communities in general, with the Gaullists tending to receive only the brief mention that their limited electoral presence and popular support merits.²⁰ The most detailed treatment of Gaullism in practice in North Africa – other than Danan's work on wartime Algiers – is Firestone's article dealing with the doctrine of 'integration' among the settler population in Algeria. Integration, however, as will be seen in Chapters 7-8, might be said to be as much the policy of one individual Gaullist, Jacques Soustelle, as that of the entire Gaullist movement.²¹ Among the many works on the Algerian War, the only mention of Gaullist activity tends to be brief and related to the alleged conspiracies of May 1958 that led to de Gaulle's return to power. Moreover, most general accounts of these events draw

University of Nebraska Press, 1967); R. Girardet, *La Crise militaire française* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1964); J. Planchais, *Une histoire politique de l'armée*, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 1967)

¹⁹ A. Argoud, *La Décadence, l'imposture et la tragédie* (Paris: Fayard, 1974); R. Salan, *Mémoires*, vols. 3 & 4 (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1972-74); J. Massu, *La Vraie bataille d'Alger* (Paris: Plon, 1971); J. Massu, *Le Torrent et la digue* (Paris: Plon, 1972); R. Trinquier, *Le Temps perdu* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1978); E. Jouhaud, *O mon pays perdu* (Paris: Fayard, 1969); E. Jouhaud, *Ce que je n'ai pas dit* (Paris: Fayard, 1977); A. Juin, *Mémoires*, vol. 2 (Paris: Fayard, 1960); P. Ely, *Mémoires*, vol. 2: *Suez...le 13 Mai* (Paris: Plon, 1969)

²⁰ A. Nouschi, *L'Algérie amère 1914-1994* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1995); Y. Danan, *La Vie politique à Alger de 1940 à 1944* (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1963); C.R. Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present*, trans. & ed. M. Betts (London: Hurst & Co., 1991); D. Leconte, *Les Pieds-noirs: histoire et portrait d'une communauté*, (Paris: Seuil, 1980); P. Nora, *Les Français d'Algérie* (Paris: René Julliard, 1961); P. Laffont, *Histoire de la France en Algérie* (Paris: Plon, 1980); S.H. Van Dyke, *French Settler Politics during the Algerian War* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 1980)

²¹ On integration, see Y. Firestone, 'The Doctrine of Integration with France among the Europeans of Algeria, 1955-1960', *Comparative Political Studies*, 4 (July 1971), pp. 177-203

heavily on the work of contemporary observers such as Ferniot or the Brombergers, whose accounts, published in the 1950s and 1960s, still constitute the principal source of reference for the events that led to the return of de Gaulle.²² More detailed analysis of the role of the Gaullists in the Algerian crisis and the end of the Fourth Republic are provided by Andrews' *French Politics and Algeria*, along with Rudelle's *Mai 1958: De Gaulle et la République*, which presents the advantage of being compiled with the aid of sources to which the author was granted exclusive access by the *Fondation Charles de Gaulle*, although the final result at times bears close resemblance to the various apologies for Gaullism published in participants' memoirs.²³ Further valuable material on the background to Gaullists' involvement in the Algerian crisis is provided by Bourdrel's detailed *La Dernière chance de l'Algérie française*, which, though dealing primarily with the Mollet government of 1956-57, nevertheless gives useful information on the increasing vehemence of the Gaullists' opposition and the development of Gaullist thinking.²⁴ While this study will not seek to provide a definitive treatment of the events of May 1958, whose true nature may never become clear in the apparent absence of reliable sources and the abundance of conspiracy theories, it will seek to trace the development of the idea among Gaullists that a crisis could arise, or be provoked, via the Algerian crisis, that would bring

²² M. & S. Bromberger, *Les 13 complots du 13 mai* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1959); J. Ferniot, *De Gaulle et le 13 mai* (Paris: Plon, 1965). Articles by Touchard and Williams give a useful bibliographic overview of other work on the subject in the period immediately following May 1958, most of which presents the same evidence as the Brombergers: J. Touchard, 'La Fin de la Quatrième République', *Revue française de science politique*, 8 (Dec. 1958), pp. 917-28; P. Williams, 'The Fourth Republic: Murder or Suicide?', in P. Williams, *Wars, Plots and Scandals in Post-War France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 129-66. The best overall treatments of the Algerian War are H. Alleg et al., *La Guerre d'Algérie* (3 vols.), (Paris: Les Temps Actuels, 1981); Y. Courrière, *La Guerre d'Algérie* (4 vols.), (Paris: Fayard, 1971); B. Droz & E. Lever, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Seuil, 1982); H. Elsenhans, *La Guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962. La Transition d'une France à une autre. Le Passage de la IVème à la Vème République*, trans. by V. Goupy (Paris: Published, 1999). T. Oppermann, *Le problème algérien: données historiques, juridiques, politiques*, trans. by J. Lecerf (Paris: François Maspero, 1961) is particularly useful for its emphasis on international aspects of the conflict.

²³ O. Rudelle, *Mai 58: De Gaulle et la République* (Paris: Plon, 1988); O. Rudelle, 'Gaullisme et crise d'identité républicaine' in *La Guerre d'Algérie et les Français*, ed. by J.P. Rioux (Paris: Fayard, 1990), pp. 180-201; W. G. Andrews, *French Politics and Algeria: The process of policy formation 1954-1962* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962); Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *L'Avènement de la Vème République: entre nouveauté et tradition* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1999)

²⁴ P. Bourdrel, *La Dernière chance de l'Algérie française: du gouvernement socialiste au retour de de Gaulle, 1956-1958* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996)

about the return to power of de Gaulle. In this respect, in addition to the above mentioned treatments of the end of the Fourth Republic (note 23), the recent, controversial, study by Nick, *Résurrection*, provides useful information on the underground activities of Gaullists between 1954 and 1958.²⁵

The Moroccan and Tunisian aspects of the subject have received considerably less attention than the Algerian War. The most comprehensive works on the process of Tunisian and Moroccan independence are those by Bernard, Julien and El-Machât, none of which treats the Gaullists in detail. Julien briefly portrays the RPF in Tunisia as the voice of reaction and colonial conservatism, while El-Machât concentrates entirely on the Tunisian nationalists and the French government. These books, therefore, contain information on the Gaullists who held official positions relating to Morocco and Tunisia, but, with the exception of Bernard's reference to the relationship between Gilbert Grandval and de Gaulle, their views are not treated as an expression of Gaullism, but rather as an expression of French colonial policy.²⁶ Morocco and Tunisia have been discussed in the context of their international significance under the Fourth Republic, by El-Machât and Lacroix-Riz, both of whose work is useful in its demonstration of the increasing attention paid to the North African region by those with an interest in international and strategic questions throughout the 1950s. These books' particular focus on American interest in the protectorates provides a basis upon which to assess the combination of Gaullists' concerns for Franco-American relations and colonial questions.²⁷ The repercussions

²⁵ C. Nick, *Résurrection. Naissance de la Vème République: un coup d'Etat démocratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1998) Useful works on Fourth Republic politics in general, which devote some space to the Gaullists, are G. Elgey, *Histoire de la IV^e République* (4 vols.) (Paris: Fayard, 1965-97) and P. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic* (London: Longman, 1964)

²⁶ S. El Machât, *Tunisie: les chemins vers l'indépendance (1945-1956)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992); C.A. Julien, *Et la Tunisie devint indépendante (1951-1957)* (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1985); S. Bernard, *Le Conflit franco-marocain 1943-1956* (3 vols.) (Brussels: Editions de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1963). Bernard devotes a chapter to Grandval's spell in Morocco (Vol. 1, pp. 273-315), which is useful for its comments on the contacts between Grandval and de Gaulle, but not based on any primary source material.

²⁷ S. El Machât, *Les Etats-Unis et le Maroc: le choix stratégique 1945-1959* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996); S. El Machât, *Les Etats-Unis et la Tunisie: de l'ambiguïté à l'entente, 1945-1959* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996); A. Lacroix-Riz, *Les Protectorats d'Afrique du Nord entre la France et*

in France of the Moroccan and Tunisian questions under the Fourth Republic have, like the protectorates themselves, been overlooked in favour of work on Algeria, but a survey of the state of political debate in France has been attempted by Oved,²⁸ in an article that gives a brief outline of the positions of the main political forces, including the RPF. The specific role of the Gaullists in Morocco and Tunisia, whether on the level of local organisation or general policy, has not been the subject of any detailed study; the promisingly-titled *De Gaulle et le Maroc* deals with only the Second World War and the Fifth Republic.²⁹

In addition to works on Gaullism or Fourth Republic politics, many leading Gaullist figures have also been the subject of biographical treatment. While the published biographies vary in depth and usefulness, largely due to differences in the availability of archival sources, they nevertheless represent a significant contribution to the literature available to scholars of Fourth Republic Gaullism, if only because they are able to offer some information on a period in which many Gaullists did not hold any public office of note, and therefore were not included in works on government policy. Many biographies of de Gaulle make only passing reference to the Gaullist movement. Lacouture's work, however, does provide useful information on the RPF, detailing the General's relationship with the movement he created, and demonstrating

Washington, du débarquement à l'indépendance: Maroc et Tunisie, 1942-1956 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988). El Machat's trilogy on the United States and North Africa is completed by *Les Etats-Unis et l'Algérie: de la méconnaissance à la reconnaissance 1945-1962* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996). Gaullist attitudes to the United States have received much coverage, though little of it has focused specifically on the Fourth Republic, for example R.O. Paxton & N. Wahl (eds.), *De Gaulle and the United States: a centennial reappraisal*, (Oxford: Berg, 1994). General works on Franco-American relations also provide a useful synthesis of the potential for discord under the Fourth Republic, a potential that was certainly recognised by Gaullists in both the Fourth and Fifth Republics. C. Cogan, *Oldest Allies, Guarded Friends* (Westport & London: Praeger, 1994); F. Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance Since World War II* (New York: Twayne, 1992); I. Wall, *France, the United States and the Algerian War* (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 2001); I. Wall, *The United States and the Making of Post-war France, 1945-1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); I. Wall, 'The United States, Algeria, and the Fall of the Fourth French Republic', *Diplomatic History*, 8 (1994), pp. 498-511

²⁸ G. Oved, 'Le Débat politique sur le Maroc de 1945 à 1955', *Relations Internationales*, 37 (1984), pp. 55-80

²⁹ M. Seimi (ed.), *De Gaulle et le Maroc* (Paris: Publisud, 1990)

the frustration and differences of opinion that arose.³⁰ As far as other prominent Gaullists are concerned, the most revealing and well documented biographies deal with Debré, Soustelle and Georges Catroux.³¹ In each of these works, the biographer has benefited from some access to private papers, while they also have the merit of according considerable importance to periods in which their subject was not active in national politics. Other biographies of Gaullists - dealing with Chaban-Delmas, Michelet and Foccart³² - are less reliable in terms of sources and objectivity, the biographer often having personal connections with the subject. In the case of Foccart and Michelet, however, who have received very little scholarly attention at all, the biographies do provide an indication of the subjects' chief areas of interest and of their personal contacts within and beyond the Gaullist movement. Other leading Gaullists – notably Fouchet, Terrenoire and Palewski – appear not to have attracted the attention of biographers. This apparent omission, however, may be explained by the lack of availability of documentary material.

Given the paucity of comprehensive treatment of Gaullists' views on North Africa in secondary sources, the writings of Gaullists themselves on the subject provide a valuable resource, which has not yet been fully exploited by scholars. Gaullist writing on North Africa falls into two categories: articles published during the Fourth Republic, and subsequent works of history or memoirs. Articles and speeches produced by leading Gaullists will therefore constitute a valuable complement to archival sources, illustrating the development of Gaullist thought as well as the means that were used to appeal to different audiences. Several leading Gaullists were very active in the production of articles for the national press and academic journals,

³⁰ Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, vol. 2: *Le politique*

³¹ P. Samuel, *Michel Debré: l'architecte du Général* (Paris: Arnaud Franel, 1999); B. Ullmann, *Jacques Soustelle: le mal aimé* (Paris: Plon, 1995); H. Lerner, *Catroux* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990)

³² P. Chastenot, *Chaban* (Paris: Seuil, 1991); J. Mousseau, *Chaban-Delmas* (Paris: Perrin, 2000); P. Péan, *L'Homme de l'ombre: éléments d'enquête autour de Jacques Foccart, l'homme le plus mystérieux et le plus puissant de la V^e République* (Paris: Fayard, 1990); J. Charbonnel, *Edmond Michelet* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1987); C. Michelet, *Mon père Edmond Michelet* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1981)

and were in great demand as speakers, particularly towards the end of the Fourth Republic. The writings and speeches of Gaullists are worthy of examination as they complement archival sources and can reveal important nuances in the development of Gaullist policy. Gaullists, notably Soustelle, Debré and Palewski, published essays in journals or in book form in popular series such as Plon's *Tribune Libre*. Soustelle, Debré, Catroux and Palewski wrote for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Revue de Paris* and similar influential and widely-read publications. The national press, essentially *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, also occasionally published work by prominent Gaullists, while Debré and Soustelle went as far as the creation of weekly newspapers to further the spread of their message.³³ The military press is a further useful source, given the military aspect of the subject, in that it shows the extent to which 'Gaullist' ideas penetrated military and strategic thought. Debré and Soustelle were also occasional contributors to publications such as the *Revue de Défense Nationale*. While press articles must be treated with some caution by researchers, being written in a specific context and for a specific audience, they allow, in the cases of Debré and Soustelle in particular, some degree of detailed analysis of their authors' views.

The behaviour of Gaullists in parliament will also be used as a source to complement the information available in official party or personal papers.³⁴ Debré, in the Senate, and Soustelle, in the National Assembly, were the acknowledged leaders of parliamentary Gaullism,³⁵ and indeed some of the most prolific of all politicians in terms of their contributions to debate. They also contributed to the widely-held view of Fourth Republic Gaullism as little more than a permanent opposition to the

³³ The *Courrier de la Colère*, founded and edited by Michel Debré, appeared weekly from November 1957 until June 1958, after which it became *Le Courrier de la Nation. Voici Pourquoi*, edited by Claude Delmas but with Soustelle as its high-profile political editor, was published from December 1957 to May 1958. The *Union Pour le Salut et le Renouveau de l'Algérie Française* (USRAF) – led by Soustelle – published a newspaper entitled *La vérité sur l'Algérie* from 1956; it later became *Vérités sur l'Algérie et le Sahara*.

³⁴ The RPF had 118 elected members in 1951 in the National Assembly, this total declining to 72 by 1955 because of defections and splits. In the 1956 elections, the RS won only 20 National Assembly seats. In the Senate, the RPF had 56 seats in 1952 and 37 by 1954, while the RS counted 36 senators in 1955. The ARS/URAS had 30 deputies between 1953 and 1955.

³⁵ Debré was leader of the RS in the Senate; Soustelle in the Assemblée Nationale

regime, given the ferocity of their attacks on government. They were not alone in their parliamentary combat, however. Less well-known Gaullists such as Raymond Dronne, Henri Fouques-Duparc and Raymond Triboulet, who rarely if ever held high office within either Gaullism or government, also made a significant contribution to the articulation of Gaullist views in parliament. The clearest cases of the Gaullist group in parliament achieving victory for its cause by concerted action and persuasive argument are the defeat of the European Defence Community in 1954, and the fall of the Bourgès-Manoury government in 1957 over the Algerian problem. The latter case is widely recognised as having been engineered largely by the arguments of Jacques Soustelle alone. Parliamentary Gaullism, therefore, must be seen as an important aspect of the movement's activities, notable as much for the content of the speeches as for the tactics that allowed the Gaullists to exert an influence disproportionate to their numbers through their ever-present threat of bringing down a government.

A further source that is of use in establishing the behaviour of Gaullists, albeit one that must be used with considerable care, is the memoirs of participants in the Gaullist parties and Fourth Republic politics. Most of the leading Gaullists of the period covered by this study have written memoirs, although in some cases these mirror the standard histories of Gaullism by dealing only superficially with the Fourth Republic. Among Gaullists who held official posts, the most revealing memoirs are those of Pierre Billotte, Christian Fouchet, Gilbert Grandval, Gaston Palewski and Jacques Soustelle. Chaban-Delmas' memoirs, however, provide little information of relevance to the study of the Fourth Republic, notably on the events of May 1958 in which their author played a crucial role.³⁶ Other high-ranking Gaullists have produced memoirs detailing Gaullism's parliamentary and extraparliamentary

³⁶ P. Billotte, *Le Passé au futur* (Paris: Stock, 1979); C. Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain* (2 vols.) (Paris: Plon, 1971-73); G. Grandval, *Ma Mission au Maroc* (Paris: Plon, 1956); G. Palewski, *Mémoires d'action 1924-1974* (Paris: Plon, 1988); J. Soustelle, *Vingt-huit ans de gaullisme* (2nd ed.) (Paris: J'ai lu, 1971); J. Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires de demain* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997).

activities, and, in the case of Foccart and Terrenoire, also shedding some light on the private views of de Gaulle. These works are useful in that they allow for some insight into the activities of those Gaullists who devoted themselves to opposition to the Fourth Republic and the spread both of de Gaulle's ideas and of the General as a recourse or potential saviour.³⁷ A third category of Gaullist memoirs, perhaps of less direct relevance to this study, consists of work that focuses principally on the RPF or on the author's relationship with de Gaulle.³⁸ While not dealing directly with Gaullist policy or colonial matters, these works do nevertheless contribute to an understanding of the different trends within Gaullism, the means used to extend its support and the progress among Gaullists of the idea that de Gaulle's return could be engineered in response to a crisis. Yet, as with all memoirs, these works must be used in conjunction with other, more objective, sources. Indeed, the majority of Gaullists' memoirs do not contain any revelations or contradictions of what might be assumed; rather, they facilitate understanding of the nuances of policy debates, the details of internal party affairs or the pace of changes.

The primary sources used in this study are a combination of public and private, published and unpublished documents. Among the published sources are the proceedings of the *Assemblée Nationale* and the *Conseil de la République* (Senate), along with relevant volumes of the *Documents Diplomatiques Français*.³⁹ Also in the category of published sources is the press of the Gaullist movement. For the RPF, this consists of *Le Rassemblement*, *L'Étincelle*, *Courrier d'Information Politique* and

³⁷ M. Debré, *Trois Républiques pour une France: mémoires* (vol. 2) (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988); P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle: entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard* (Paris: Fayard/Jeune Afrique, 1995); L. Terrenoire, *De Gaulle 1947-1954: pourquoi l'échec?* (Paris: Plon, 1981).

³⁸ A. Astoux, *L'Oubli: de Gaulle 1946-1958* (Paris: J.C. Lattès, 1974); O. Guichard, *Mon général* (Paris: Grasset, 1980); P. Lefranc, *Avec qui vous savez* (Paris: Plon, 1979); J. Vendroux, *Cette chance que j'ai eue* (Paris: Plon, 1974).

³⁹ *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Commission de Publication des Documents Français, Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1951-58* (Paris: Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques/ Imprimerie Nationale, 1959-) *Journal Officiel de la République Française: Débats de l'Assemblée Nationale* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1951-58); *Journal Officiel de la République Française: Débats du Conseil de la République* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1951-58)

La Lettre à l'Union Française.⁴⁰ The *Républicains Sociaux* published a newspaper entitled *Les Idées ... Les Faits*.⁴¹ The press titles of prominent Gaullists may also be considered in this category; they include Debré's *Courrier de la Colère*, Soustelle's *Voici Pourquoi*, Jacques Dauer's *Le Télégramme de Paris* and *Paris-Jeunes*.⁴² Among North African newspapers, the *Echo d'Alger* is of use because of its position as the authoritative and influential voice of the settler community, but of more direct relevance to a study of Gaullism is the smaller *Journal d'Alger*. The only pro-Gaullist publication in French North Africa (outside the RPF's own publications), it is a revealing guide to the features of North African Gaullism that distinguished it from its metropolitan counterpart. Perhaps the most useful of these titles is the *Lettre à l'Union Française*: it was the only RPF publication to remain active until 1958. Edited by Jacques Foccart, who contributed a leader article for each issue, it was conceived as the link between the metropolitan RPF and its supporters in the Empire. Its focus is particularly appropriate for the present study, being chiefly concerned with colonial and international questions, along with regular analysis of the failings of the French government and institutions to deal satisfactorily with such issues. Foccart's interest in colonial questions, and his close contact with de Gaulle, make the *Lettre à l'Union Française* a most useful source for the study of Gaullism and colonial affairs, although one might justifiably ask whether it reveals more about Gaullism in general or about Foccart's particular interpretation of it.

⁴⁰ *L'Étincelle* was published in 1947-48, and was succeeded by *Le Rassemblement*. The *Courrier d'Information Politique* was published between April 1952 and November 1955, with Foccart replacing Terrenoire as editor in February 1955. It was intended to serve as a guide for party activists to the main political problems of the time and the RPF's attitude to them, compared to *Le Rassemblement*, which carried less detailed political discussion and more news of the activities of the RPF or de Gaulle. The *Lettre à l'Union Française* was published from 1949 until June 1958. It often included material from the *Courrier d'Information Politique* on domestic politics, leaving Foccart to concentrate on colonial and international affairs in his contributions. The *Lettre à l'Union Française* and *Courrier d'Information Politique* have been consulted virtually in their entirety for this study. Regional editions of *L'Étincelle* and *Le Rassemblement* were also produced; some of the North African editions have been consulted, although many appear to be no longer available.

⁴¹ *Les idées... Les faits*, edited by Roger Frey, was published from April 1954 to May 1958.

⁴² For details of *Le Courrier de la Colère* and *Voici Pourquoi*, see note 33. *Paris-Jeunes* was published by Dauer from February 1953 to May 1955, and was replaced by *Le Télégramme de Paris* until 1958. All these titles have been extensively consulted.

The archival sources for this study are, for the most part, those of the Gaullist movement. The RPF archives, held by the *Fondation Charles de Gaulle*, are now open to researchers, with the exception of financial documents and personal information about members. The series used in the present study are those relating to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and the extensive collection of reports prepared for the RPF's *Assises* (annual conferences) and biennial *Conseils Nationaux*. These reports constitute the clearest indication of the evolution of policy and the extent of debate within the RPF. The series relating to North Africa are extensive, and deal with both party organisation and policy. In particular, they contain a large amount of correspondence between ordinary *militants* and officials in Paris, generally Soustelle or Foccart, which highlights the extent of divergence from official views among party members. The RPF files relating to the Sahara and to party organisation and parliamentary behaviour and cohesion have also been consulted. The archives of the *Républicains Sociaux* are considerably less extensive than those of the RPF. Also held by the *Fondation Charles de Gaulle*, they consist largely of reports for party conferences and policy meetings, rather than correspondence between members and the hierarchy. This is most likely a result of the somewhat disorganised nature of contacts between leadership and members at the time of the RS. The reports prepared for conferences, and texts of speeches and debates, however, are useful in demonstrating the debates within the RS over the extent of participation in government, and the limits that they were not prepared to cross in the name of maintaining their stake in the 'system'. *Républicains Sociaux* documents reveal the differing degrees of interest shown in the RS by prominent Gaullists; Soustelle, for example, appears as a semi-detached member of the organisation, of more value for the support his name could attract than for his own contribution. The events of May 1958 are not well-documented in archives, although those of the RS do show an attempt to improve the movement's organisation in Algiers in the early months of 1958, in anticipation of its potential usefulness. Thus, despite their patchy nature, the

RS archives do complement those of the RPF in demonstrating the changes in Gaullism as it passed from the hands of one movement to another.

Private papers of politicians have also been used where available. It must be noted, regrettably, that many collections that would cast more light on the subject remain inaccessible. Chief among these are the papers of de Gaulle himself. The archives of Soustelle, Chaban-Delmas, Fouchet, Palewski and Foccart are also all unavailable at present, though the Gaullist archives contain many documents produced by Foccart. Nevertheless, several interesting and extensive collections have been consulted. While Soustelle's papers are not open to researchers, the RPF archives contain a significant number of documents relating to his period as governor-general in Algeria and his activities in the RPF and the *Union Pour le Salut et le Renouveau de l'Algérie Française* (USRAF). Michel Debré's archives relating to the Fourth Republic were also consulted, although the Debré papers in general are not intended to be made available for consultation until cataloguing has been completed. Among the documents that were available, at the *Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques*, Debré's correspondence with collaborators and constituents was of considerable value. In particular, Debré may be distinguished somewhat from many other Gaullists in that his principal correspondents and collaborators were not all fellow Gaullists. Thus, the Debré archives are valuable for the light they shed on the extent of contacts and common ground between Gaullists and others, in addition to the opportunity they afford to trace the evolution of Debré's thought, for example through drafts of *Courrier de la Colère* articles. Also at the *Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques*, the papers of Jacques Dauer were consulted. Dauer, as one of the leading 'activist' Gaullists, involved in youth and student movements in the 1950s, is a revealing source for the methods, extent and success of Gaullist propaganda, and the role that colonial and foreign policy questions played in the general appeal of Gaullism.

In the realm of non-'Gaullist' archives, some of the collections of the *Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre* have been of use. Reports on the morale of troops and populations in North Africa are a valuable source for the study of the means and success of Gaullist penetration of these important groups. While many sensitive military files relating to the Algerian War remain closed,⁴³ the military archives do reveal the evolution of policy and perceptions of priorities in relation to North Africa, and as such contribute to analysis of the convergence between Gaullists and the military during the Fourth Republic.

⁴³ In particular, military files relating to the question of torture in Algeria remain inaccessible.

GAULLISM AND GAULLISTS

Gaullism

Gaullism has been the subject of a number of attempts, by both historians and political scientists, to define its essential tenets. The most problematic aspect of the subject has been the extent to which Gaullism can be said to reach beyond the ideas of de Gaulle himself. In addition, the apparent existence of different trends within the Gaullist movement has raised the question of whether it would not be more accurate to speak not of Gaullism but of Gaullisms. One of the most influential definitions of Gaullism has been that offered by René Rémond, who argues that Gaullism represented essentially a modern form of Bonapartism, because of its emphasis on international prestige and a strong centralised State.⁴⁴ Rémond's analysis, however, suffers from its failure to acknowledge the diversity within Gaullism; the only manifestation of different trends within the Gaullist movement identified by Rémond is the evolution of Gaullism after the end of de Gaulle's presidency in 1969.⁴⁵ Further general analyses of Gaullism have been attempted, by Jean Charlot and Jean Touchard for instance, while the most extensive attempt in English to define the ideology of de Gaulle is that of Anthony Hartley.⁴⁶ Hartley's analysis includes some discussion of Fourth Republic Gaullism, yet his work is typical of most studies of this subject, focusing on the idea of Gaullism being little more than a permanent opposition movement, with little indication of the process of reflection on policy taking place between 1946 and 1958. Indeed, having first defined Gaullism as a doctrine emanating virtually entirely from de Gaulle, and operating on the level of general principles rather than details of policy, Hartley argues that during the period in which de Gaulle was not active in political life the activities of the Gaullist movement amounted to little more than token opposition to the regime:

⁴⁴ R. Rémond, *Les Droites en France* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1982), pp. 313-49

⁴⁵ Rémond, *Les Droites en France*, pp. 313-4

⁴⁶ J. Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'opposition* and *L'UNR: étude du pouvoir au sein d'un parti politique* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1967); J. Touchard, *Le Gaullisme, 1940-1969*; A. Hartley, *Gaullism: The Rise and Fall of a Political Movement*

De Gaulle and his followers played a negative role, and Gaullism only altered its position - in so far as it had one - to change from being an active threat to the regime to being merely a symbolic condemnation of it.⁴⁷

The idea, therefore, that the Gaullist movement, as opposed to the General alone, actually played a role in developing policy during the Fourth Republic, has been overlooked by most attempts to define Gaullism. This is a result of the focus that studies of Gaullism have tended to place on the general principles of the doctrine rather than specific policies, a tendency that has served to emphasise the importance of the general terms such as *grandeur* often used by de Gaulle.⁴⁸ Yet it would be wrong to conclude that the frequent references in Gaullist discourse to grand concepts of this kind preclude the study of more detailed and applied forms of Gaullism. The Fourth Republic, in which the Gaullist movement was not in government and was therefore freed somewhat from the obligations of always presenting a united front on policy matters, provides a useful context in which to attempt a more nuanced definition of Gaullism. Thus, it is hoped that the present study, while focusing on the Gaullists' reaction to North African affairs, will contribute to the elaboration of a fuller definition of Fourth Republic Gaullism than has been attempted, and will in turn cast some light on the intellectual sources of some aspects of Fifth Republic policy.

Any attempt to analyse Gaullist behaviour, however, must begin with an acknowledgement of the importance of the general principles associated with General de Gaulle.⁴⁹ His relationship with the Gaullist movement is also of importance to an understanding of Gaullism, and this will be discussed at a later stage. It has been said that de Gaulle operated on the level of general principles and

⁴⁷ Hartley, p. 97

⁴⁸ The only real exception to this approach is that of Watson, who argues for the importance of members of the Gaullist movement rather than de Gaulle alone in the development of policy. His work, however, is confined to the 5th Republic, although his approach appears well suited to the study of Fourth Republic Gaullism. J. Watson, 'The Internal Dynamics of Gaullism, 1958-1969' in *The Right in France, 1789-1996*, ed. by N. Atkin and F. Tallett (London: Taurus, 1997), pp. 245-59.

⁴⁹ D. Johnson, 'The Political Principles of General de Gaulle', *International Affairs*, 41 (1965), pp. 650-62.

declarations of intent, leaving others to concern themselves with their application in practice.⁵⁰ The relevance of de Gaulle's general principles to the subject of this study derives from his frequent references to France's world role and to the need for a sense of national unity, both of which themes were to feature in Gaullist fears for the potential consequences of the North African crises for France. France's role in the world, as de Gaulle saw it, was to project its influence beyond the hexagon, to be seen to be in control of international developments affecting the nation, and, through the achievement of these aims, to unite the people of France and the Empire behind the notion of a strong, independent state. The details of how such principles were to be applied did not emerge until the post-war period, first through de Gaulle's spell as Head of State between 1944 and 1946, and subsequently as the Gaullists developed responses to the changing international situation, within the framework of the principles arising from the wartime experience. In 1944-46, for example, it was French preoccupations with the future of Germany that led de Gaulle to the conclusion, in line with what wartime precedents had led him to suspect, that France's allies in Britain and America could not be relied upon to always defend and share France's vital interests, and that France must therefore rely on its own resources. Thus, in the immediate post-war period, de Gaulle's views of the need for France to be able to act independently of alliances to secure its interests were reinforced by the Allies' attempts to settle the pressing international questions. De Gaulle's annoyance that France was overlooked at the Yalta conference⁵¹ was compounded by the apparent failure of Britain and the United States to provide sufficient guarantees of French protection against Germany.⁵² The foundations of subsequent Gaullist attacks on France's so-called allies were laid in this period. De Gaulle was equally concerned in the post-war years about the threat posed to France by the USSR, because of the strength of French communism and his fears of a

⁵⁰ Watson, 'Internal Dynamics...', S. Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*

⁵¹ On the lasting effect of Gaullist perceptions of the Yalta conference during the Fourth Republic, F. Tourette, 'Yalta et ses mythes', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, 114 (2000), pp. 101-14.

⁵² J. Young, *France, the Cold War and the Western Alliance, 1944-49: French foreign policy and post-war Europe* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), pp. 223-4.

Soviet-German alliance. In this area, too, Gaullism expressed a sense that France's allies had failed to appreciate the greater immediacy of the dangers facing France than those potentially facing Britain and the United States.⁵³

As the Fourth Republic confronted new international problems, Gaullism showed some evolution, adapting the views of the General to the changing international situation. Indeed, as Hartley points out: 'It was ... in foreign policy and defence that the movement was to make its most characteristic contribution to French political life and itself undergo an evolution of some significance'.⁵⁴ Foreign policy, therefore, emerged during the Fourth Republic as a key area in which Gaullism, though acting in accordance with the principles of its founder, redefined itself in response to events. As will be seen in detail in chapter 4, the European Defence Community affair and the apparent spread of communism in the Empire confirmed de Gaulle's suspicion of the Atlantic system, which dated from 1944-46 or earlier, and in turn brought about a shift in Gaullism's emphasis, from the projection of French influence within a Western alliance to a greater sense of France's unique international role, a shift which at times amounted to anti-Americanism.⁵⁵

If the need to develop and adapt foreign policy was one of the means by which Fourth Republic Gaullism evolved, then colonial questions also played a crucial role in the evolution of Gaullist doctrine. The importance of the Algerian War for the development and the policies of Fifth Republic Gaullism has been examined in terms of the restraining effect that the Algerian problem had on domestic policy between 1958 and 1962, with some writers arguing that the four years spent seeking a solution to the Algerian crisis effectively prevented Gaullist policies from being fully implemented throughout the period of de Gaulle's presidency.⁵⁶ The same could be

⁵³ De Gaulle, *Discours et messages*, vol. 2, *Dans l'attente 1946-1958* (Paris: Plon, 1971), p. 190 (declaration, 9.6.1948).

⁵⁴ Hartley, p. 143

⁵⁵ Hartley, pp. 143-5

⁵⁶ Hartley, pp. 157-8

said for Fourth Republic Gaullism, in that towards the end of the Fourth Republic, it became preoccupied with the crisis in North Africa to such an extent that other areas of policy were either ignored or altered as the Gaullists argued that a satisfactory solution to the North African problems was a prerequisite of France's very survival.

Gaullism's general stance on colonial matters, if not throughout the Fourth Republic then certainly in its early stages, was deeply influenced by de Gaulle's wartime colonial reforms and policies. Aware of the great importance of the Empire to the Free French, de Gaulle introduced important reforms,⁵⁷ while at the same time attempting to ensure that the link between France and the colonies, so important in the establishment of Free France, would not be broken despite the global moves towards decolonisation and in particular the American insistence on self-determination for European colonies. In 1943, de Gaulle, drawing from the Provisional Government's report on North Africa, prepared largely by General Catroux, granted citizenship to 60,000 Algerians. These were mainly former officers, civil servants, local or tribal leaders and those with a certain level of education. They were placed in the first electoral college along with the European voters. De Gaulle and Catroux also specifically stated at this time that no further political reforms were to be expected in Algeria and that any reduction of French authority was inconceivable. In 1944, de Gaulle turned his attention to sub-Saharan Africa, in his speech at Brazzaville. This speech became the main point of reference for Gaullists seeking to demonstrate their colonial policy throughout the Fourth Republic. The key themes of the Brazzaville conference of 1944 were the introduction of assemblies and voting to the colonies, celebrating the political 'maturity' that France's civilising mission had brought about. However, the majority of those present at the conference

⁵⁷ The Popular Front government of 1936-38 had begun a programme of colonial reform that had been interrupted by war and in some cases reversed by Vichy. It is not clear to what extent de Gaulle was inspired by these reforms, but it can certainly be argued that the earlier reforms had awakened a desire for change in the colonies that de Gaulle knew would have to be satisfied at the end of the War. See T. Chafer and A. Sackur (eds.), *French Colonial Empire and the Popular Front; Hope and disillusion* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999) and M. Thomas, *The French Empire at War, 1940-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

were colonial administrators, not local African leaders, and de Gaulle's speech cannot be seen as an early indication of an intention to proceed with decolonisation.⁵⁸

De Gaulle's Bordeaux speech of May 15, 1947 further outlined the Gaullist vision of the *Union française* – as the Empire was now known – acknowledging the distinct 'character' of each territory and advocating an administrative and institutional framework for each territory, to be adapted to the different levels of 'evolution' in the different parts of the Empire. All this was to be complemented by federal institutions common to all member territories, within the framework of a strong central French state. In particular, de Gaulle stressed the absolute need for the colonies to remain French. Along with the Brazzaville declaration, this speech defined Gaullist policy on the colonies for the years to come; it was taken as the last word on the subject by both conservative Gaullists and by those who simply showed little interest in the colonies, believing the essential problems to have been solved at Brazzaville and a plan for future action to have been set out at Bordeaux.⁵⁹

The reforms proposed at Brazzaville and Bordeaux were not particularly radical or wide-ranging, and were unlikely to satisfy nationalist aspirations. Yet, during the Fourth Republic, the Gaullists generally failed to build on this legacy of limited initial reforms and, while claiming that Brazzaville made Gaullism a doctrine of colonial liberalism, many Gaullists continued to fiercely oppose any further change. To fully understand the refusal of even liberal Gaullists to acknowledge nationalist aspirations, it is essential to understand the link between the establishment of strong government and the granting of autonomy. While it was possible, in theory, for a Gaullist to accept the granting of autonomy to a territory by a strong France, the possibility that an external body – such as the United Nations or the Arab League –

⁵⁸ De Gaulle's speech at Brazzaville can be found in his *Mémoires de Guerre*, vol. 2: *L'Unité* (Paris: Plon, 1956), pp. 477-80.

⁵⁹ For de Gaulle's Bordeaux speech, see his *Discours et Messages*, vol. 2: *dans l'attente 1946-1958*, pp. 74-81. On the influence of the speech in the Fourth Republic, Guy Pervillé, 'Le RPF et l'Union Française: Rapport de Synthèse' in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle et le RPF*, pp. 521-29.

could force a weak France to abandon North Africa was, for Gaullists, not only an aberration but an increasingly real danger caused by the parliamentary regime. Thus, the Gaullists' defence of the colonial status quo can be seen as a manifestation of their fierce opposition to the regime. At stake was the status of the nation; a hasty decolonisation on terms dictated by an authority other than the French government would represent a heavy blow to France's prestige. As the Fourth Republic wore on, the idea grew among Gaullists that this blow to national status might even be fatal to the regime. It was not until the second half of the Fourth Republic, after the announcement in 1954 of 'internal autonomy' for Morocco and Tunisia, that Gaullists began to adapt their colonial policy in a similar way to that in which the foreign policy they had inherited from World War II had evolved in response to changing situations. By 1958, considerable evolution in Gaullist colonial policy – not all of it in a progressive direction – can be identified. The process of change, however, was a slow and gradual one and may even have been held up by the certainties that the legacy of Brazzaville and the Bordeaux speech seemed to confer. The silence of de Gaulle himself on colonial matters during much of the Fourth Republic is surely another important factor in the slow evolution and diverse results that characterised Gaullist thinking on Empire.

Yet, while Gaullism displayed some evolution during the Fourth Republic in its development of detailed applications for general principles of foreign and colonial policy, it nevertheless continued to stress the theme of national unity that, along with *grandeur*, is the key feature of de Gaulle's writings. Indeed, for de Gaulle, national unity was bound up with *grandeur*, and could best be achieved through it: 'Il faudrait savoir, en effet, si quelque grand rêve national n'est pas nécessaire à un peuple pour soutenir son activité et conserver sa cohésion'.⁶⁰ In this context, the crime of the Fourth Republic, according to Gaullism, was to undermine national unity by failing to provide a national and international vision of sufficient scope and scale. The

⁶⁰ De Gaulle, *Vers l'Armée de Métier*, p. 76, quoted in Hartley, p. 12

divisions among the French population were certainly never far from the mind of Gaullists, as can be seen in the RPF's frequent reference to the Communists whom it identified as the principal enemies of national unity, and to political parties which by their very nature served to emphasise division over a sense of common purpose.

In terms of Gaullist political activity during the Fourth Republic, the most important feature of Gaullism that, in theory at least, marked out the RPF, the ARS/URAS and the RS as different from their political rivals was the claim that Gaullism, through its foundation in the Second World War experience and its interest in uniting the nation behind grand principles, was a more powerful force than mere political parties. The clearest definition of this concept was provided by de Gaulle himself in 1952:

Ce grand mouvement dépasse de loin les limites de ce qui est électoral. Il entre plus ou moins dans l'esprit de tout le monde, même de ceux qui votent contre lui. C'est ce qui se passait déjà, pendant la guerre, pour ce qu'on appelait le 'gaullisme'. Chaque Français fut, est ou sera 'gaulliste'... Ceci pour vous dire à quel point le Rassemblement du Peuple Français s'étend dans la nation plus loin et plus profondément que ne peuvent l'exprimer des chiffres de suffrages électoraux.⁶¹

In these words of de Gaulle, lie some of the essential notions that are necessary for an analysis of the political behaviour of Gaullists during the Fourth Republic. Chief among these is the refusal to accept elections as the absolute indication of the strength of political forces in the country. This aspect of Gaullism has a significant effect on the methodology that can be employed in the study of Gaullism: more than most parties, Gaullism did not see its activities as being focused on the parliamentary and electoral arenas to the exclusion of other means of exerting influence. Extraparliamentary and, to some extent, antiparliamentary means of organisation and expression occupied a more central place in the Gaullist movement than in

⁶¹ De Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, vol. 2: *dans l'attente 1946-1958*, p. 513 (Press Conference, 10.3.1952)

'mainstream' parties.⁶² Thus, it is important to identify non-politically aligned groups – such as war veterans – in which Gaullists sought to exert influence with the aim of generating a national network of popular support for de Gaulle.⁶³ As will be seen in chapter 8, the tactic of cultivating popular support for Gaullism became closely identified, towards the end of the Fourth Republic, with the concept of de Gaulle as the legitimate leader or saviour of the nation who would assume its leadership at a moment of crisis.⁶⁴

A further important element of Gaullism that emerges from de Gaulle's vision of his movement is the impression of a certain reluctance on the part of the General to speak of Gaullism as a doctrine or coherent movement. While this has been taken as a sign that Gaullism hardly existed at all in isolation from de Gaulle, it is equally likely that in displaying caution in the use of the term, the General was showing an awareness of the existence of different currents of opinion within Gaullism.

Although hardly surprising given the general nature of the central tenets of Gaullism, this point has received relatively little attention. Indeed, the history of different trends within Fourth Republic Gaullism has not received the same interest as have the more commonly treated questions of the splits in Fifth Republic Gaullism over

⁶² In its extraparlimentary activities, the RPF closely mirrored the Communist Party, to the extent of developing a mass movement, with a security force and propaganda machine, to rival the communists in traditionally left-wing areas such as the Paris suburbs. The tours and public addresses undertaken by de Gaulle throughout France, often taking the form of huge, highly stage-managed rallies, also constituted a key part of the RPF's activity and invited comparisons with both communism and fascism.

⁶³ The role of *anciens combattants* in French politics in general has been examined by several historians, although none focuses directly on the Fourth Republic. The work on the subject does, however, demonstrate the respect and importance accorded to war veterans and their potential to influence policy or constitute a strong opposition movement. A. Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1977); J.P. Charnay, *Société militaire et suffrage politique en France depuis 1789* (Paris: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 1964); R. Rémond, 'Les Anciens combattants et la politique', *Revue française de science politique*, 5 (1955), pp. 267-90; C. Nick, *Résurrection*; Purtschet, *Le Rassemblement du Peuple Français*, pp. 141-74

⁶⁴ B. Gaïti, *De Gaulle, prophète de la cinquième République* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1998)

Algeria, or the emergence of contrasting doctrines and movements after de Gaulle's death.⁶⁵

The most satisfactory attempt to identify different tendencies within the Gaullist movement is that of Jean Charlot in his study of the *Union Pour la Nouvelle République*, the Gaullist party formed at the beginning of the Fifth Republic.⁶⁶ Charlot identifies three broad groups within the Gaullism of 1958-59, each of which had its origins in a different form of Fourth Republic Gaullism. Kahler has also attempted to identify different branches of Gaullism, with specific reference to the Algerian crisis.⁶⁷ His division is limited to the years 1956-58, and splits Gaullists into four groups: those advocating participation in government, those fiercely hostile to the regime and in favour of direct action against it, those prioritising Algeria above all else, and the liberals. Kahler identifies the leader of each trend as, respectively, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Michel Debré, Jacques Soustelle and Edmond Michelet.⁶⁸ Kahler's analysis is persuasive in its identification of four groups, although one must exercise caution in speaking of Gaullist 'liberalism' on Algeria, as the so-called liberal Gaullists were very few in number and their liberalism did not extend as far as the renunciation of French Algeria. The other three groups of Gaullists, as Kahler observes, all came to see *Algérie française* as a central part of their priorities, even if some believed in it more strongly than others. Kahler's work on Gaullism, however, is situated within the context of a study of the consequences of decolonisation on metropolitan politics, and therefore provides only a necessarily brief survey of general tendencies within Gaullism. Likewise, his identification of de Gaulle as the unsuspected ally of the liberal Gaullists perhaps amounts to an oversimplification of

⁶⁵ On the question of 'Gaullism after de Gaulle', A. Knapp, *Gaullism since de Gaulle*, (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1994); Rémond, *Les Droites en France*; Charlot, *Le Phénomène gaulliste*. On splits within Gaullism in the 1958-62 period, P. Viansson-Ponté, *Histoire de la République gaullienne: Mai 1958-Avril 1969* (Paris: Robert Laffont/Bouquins, 1984); Touchard, *Le Gaullisme 1940-1969*

⁶⁶ Charlot, *L'UNR*

⁶⁷ M. Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: the domestic consequences of international relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984,) pp. 77-101

⁶⁸ Kahler, p. 92

the complex interplay of colonial, international and domestic factors in determining the General's ultimate decision to grant Algerian independence in 1962.⁶⁹

The terminology used by Charlot in his identification of different tendencies in Fourth Republic Gaullism is borrowed from Jacques Soustelle, who identified: 'gaullistes de foi, gaullistes de combinaison et gaullistes de raison.'⁷⁰ The 'gaullistes de foi' were characterised by their loyalty to de Gaulle above all, and by their conception of Gaullism as a kind of adventure or common enterprise. Prominent members of this group were Edmond Michelet and André Malraux.⁷¹ To these definitions one might add the notions of left and right wing Gaullism, traditional and modern forms of conservatism, nationalism and internationalism, in addition to the divisions that can be identified between those with or without Resistance backgrounds, those in favour of or hostile to reform in the Empire, and those in favour of participation in government or devoted to destroying the 'system'. Charlot's analysis, however, provides a useful starting point for the categorisation of different variations of Gaullism. A very different approach to political involvement was favoured by the 'gaullistes de combinaison', such as Jacques Chaban-Delmas. For them, the chief attraction of Gaullism consisted in its potential achievements, and to that end they preferred participation in the regular forums of political life to the 'purity' of the former category of Gaullists.⁷² The third group identified by Charlot and Soustelle - that of the 'gaullistes de raison' - lends itself most easily to a more detailed analysis of ideology, policy and political affiliations. Within this group, Charlot has suggested the existence of three different types of doctrine: a 'Doctrine

⁶⁹ Kahler, pp. 97-8

⁷⁰ Charlot, *L'UNR*, p. 276, quoting Soustelle

⁷¹ Charlot, *L'UNR*, pp. 277-8; Michelet epitomised this view of Gaullism in his *Le gaullisme, passionnante aventure* (Paris: Fayard, 1962)

⁷² Charlot, *L'UNR*, pp. 279-80; The concept of 'purity' was an important one for many of the 'Gaullistes de foi'. Jacques Vendroux, for example, claimed with pride that by 1953, 'Nous ne sommes plus que neuf à pouvoir revendiquer un brevet de pureté absolue (c'est-à-dire n'avoir voté aucune investiture)'. J. Vendroux, *Cette chance que j'ai eue*, p. 354; see also B. Gaïti, *De Gaulle, prophète de la Cinquième République*, on the same theme.

de l'Etat', social democracy, and a 'Doctrine du bien commun'.⁷³ These terms provide a useful foundation for an examination of left-wing, centrist and right-wing elements within Gaullism.

Gaullists

In analysing the different political trends represented within Gaullism, the political background of the Gaullists themselves is an important field of study. The most comprehensive work on this subject, by Gilles Le Béguec, attempts to categorise Fourth Republic Gaullists according to their pre-war political affiliations.⁷⁴ His study of the 1951 RPF group in the Assemblée Nationale reveals that approximately one third of RPF deputies had been active in right-wing movements before 1940, many of which had royalist connections, including at least thirteen former members of the Croix de Feu and Parti Social Français (PSF).⁷⁵ The high percentage of RPF members with links to movements such as the PSF, which might appear to be incompatible with attachment to the leader of the wartime resistance, demonstrates the danger in assuming that the RPF was, as some of its leaders claimed at its foundation, the continuation of Free France and the Resistance. Le Béguec's study unfortunately does not attempt to unravel the wartime activities of RPF deputies; it appears, nonetheless, that pre-war right-wing nationalism played as large a part in the movement as the reforming spirit of the resistance and the liberation.

The centre and left of French politics were also represented in the RPF, lending some weight to its claims to be a national rather than partisan movement. Between twenty and thirty of the 1951 parliamentary RPF had been members of the Christian Democrat *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP), the Radical Party or the *Union*

⁷³ Charlot, *L'UNR*, pp. 281-87

⁷⁴ G. Le Béguec, 'Les Antécédents Politiques des Députés RPF', in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle et le RPF*, pp. 338-52

⁷⁵ Le Béguec, p. 339

Démocratique et Social de la Résistance (UDSR).⁷⁶ This group, significantly, contained a relatively high proportion of figures who were to become central to the Gaullist movement, such as Terrenoire and Michelet (both former MRP members), the former Radical Chaban-Delmas, and the former socialist Soustelle, one of only two RPF deputies to have passed through the socialist party. To these names must be added that of another former Radical, Michel Debré, absent from Le Béguet's study by virtue of his being elected to the Senate and not the National Assembly. In contrast, the right of the RPF provided less of its leading figures, the most notable exception being Gaston Palewski, who had served in Third Republic ministerial cabinets under *droite parlementaire* governments.⁷⁷ Palewski's attachment to the parliamentary rather than the militant Right under the Third Republic is typical of the behaviour of RPF deputies in their former affiliations; mostly they belonged to the moderate wings of their respective political groups. Le Béguet has justifiably identified the *droite modérée* as the dominant trend in the RPF;⁷⁸ this appears to be reflected in the Gaullists' policies and electorate during the Fourth Republic.

In addition to the political 'families' mentioned above, many RPF deputies had no previous political experience. The principal feature uniting these political novices was their involvement in the Second World War. The vast majority of Gaullist deputies were veterans of either Free France or the internal (non-communist) resistance movements.⁷⁹ Indeed, it is something of a truism to state that in the early years of the Fourth Republic the common bond uniting all Gaullists was a vague desire to perpetuate the spirit of the wartime years, just as the Left was concerned principally with the enactment of the reforms promised in the Resistance charter. The RPF's short-lived predecessor, the *Union Gaulliste pour la IV^e République*, founded in 1946 by the left-leaning Gaullist René Capitant, stated that it intended to be: 'Un

⁷⁶ Le Béguet, pp. 340-1

⁷⁷ Le Béguet, p. 340. Eight Gaullists were members of ministerial cabinets in the Third Republic

⁷⁸ Le Béguet, p. 346

⁷⁹ Among the Gaullist hierarchy, only Léon Noël had no resistance connections. O. Wieviorka, 'Les dirigeants: Rapport de Synthèse', in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle et le RPF*, pp. 89-95

rassemblement, au-dessus des partis politiques et autour des combattants et résistants, de tous les Français résolus à se dévouer, dans l'esprit du 18 juin, à l'édification de la IV^e République'.⁸⁰ While the *Union Gaulliste* failed to achieve electoral success, due to the non-involvement of de Gaulle, its emphasis on the Second World War was continued in the RPF. Indeed, the networks and means of operation devised in response to the clandestine nature of resistance frequently had echoes in the RPF, with many RPF leaders having either worked together in London (Palewski, Fouchet, Soustelle), commanded the forces of the Free French (Catroux, Grandval, Billotte, Koenig) or organised both resistance and reconstruction in France in co-operation with de Gaulle (Chaban-Delmas, Debré). Jacques Foccart and Jacques Soustelle were particularly active in the clandestine side of Gaullism, being responsible for intelligence and surveillance work. The methods used during World War 2 persisted to some extent under the Fourth Republic, manifested in some quasi-military aspects of RPF meetings and security, and a tendency to regard clandestine or secretive action as a means of conducting political business. This aspect of Gaullism has been criticised as unnecessary and unrealistic by observers such as Pierre Vianson-Ponté:

Trop d'hommes honnêtes et convaincus, déformés par l'épopée de la résistance et encouragés par le mépris de la politique élevé à l'état de dogme, ont tendance à considérer que les fonds secrets, les fiches, la pression morale et l'intérêt matériel sont les meilleurs armes de gouvernement... C'est la pire, la plus critiquable et la plus condamnable des dérivations du gaullisme.⁸¹

Thus, while the RPF attracted members from various political backgrounds or none at all, their differences should not be exaggerated, as the sense of common purpose and camaraderie arising from their wartime activities often prevailed over ideological differences. Soustelle, indeed, claims that the Fourth Republic Gaullist movement's cohesion was only once threatened by an ideological debate, at the time of the Rémy

⁸⁰ Purtschet, pp. 45-6

⁸¹ P. Vianson-Ponté, *Les Gaullistes: Rituel et Annuaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1963), p. 118

affair of 1950, which is discussed in chapter 2.⁸² That this disturbance should come over the issue of the World War 2 legacy is no surprise; it was chiefly when Gaullism attempted to reach out to those who did not share its heritage of resistance that its ideological cracks began to show. The problem of attracting support among the settler populations in North Africa provides the clearest example of this; other manifestations of the problem can be found in Gaullists' relations with other parties and to some extent in the difficulties that Gaullists had in adapting their specific world-view to issues beyond France.

The third of Charlot and Soustelle's categories, the 'Gaullistes de raison', is worthy of more detailed examination in terms of the way in which senior Gaullists during the Fourth Republic were identified with different trends in relation to different issues. The so-called 'Gaullisme de gauche' is perhaps the most easily defined sub-group within the movement. This tendency never attained more than marginal status under either the Fourth or the Fifth Republic. The centrist or Christian Democrat tendency was more influential, probably because of the personal role played by its leaders, Terrenoire and Michelet. In domestic politics, its importance to the RPF consisted largely of its ability to attract centrist and Catholic votes that would otherwise go to the MRP. RPF - MRP competition was a feature of Fourth Republic politics, heightened by the fact that many of the government posts of most significance to the Gaullists – especially foreign affairs – were frequently held by MRP ministers. The leaders of this trend within the RPF were particularly active in the campaign against the European Defence Community, Michelet and Terrenoire's experience of deportation during the Second World War lending an aspect of moral authority to their denunciation of German rearmament. In colonial affairs, however, the centrist Gaullists were less strident. While both Terrenoire and Michelet believed in *Algérie française*, Michelet was one of the first politicians to publicly condemn torture, and

⁸² Soustelle, *Vingt-huit ans de Gaullisme*, cited in O. Wiewiorka, 'Les dirigeants: Rapport de Synthèse', p. 92

he argued strongly against the logic of pursuing a war that was likely to lead to greater divisions within France.⁸³ This Christian Democrat trend within Gaullism was thus of electoral value to the Gaullists, and, together with the limited left-wing Gaullism, detracts somewhat from the conventional view of Gaullism as a traditional, right-wing nationalist movement.

The so-called 'doctrine d'état' undoubtedly represented the dominant strain within Fourth Republic Gaullism. Its chief spokesman was Michel Debré, whose pre-war experience in the *Conseil d'Etat* led him to devote much of his energy to the question of the state.⁸⁴ Debré's belief that a strong state was essential to the survival and success of a nation often saw him adopt positions that have been associated with authoritarianism, nationalism and conservatism. This aspect of Gaullism – which Debré frequently translated into attacks on the regime for allowing France to become internationally and institutionally weak – can be found in the speeches and writings of the majority of Gaullist deputies. Debré's thinking on constitutional and institutional affairs was undoubtedly more developed and complex than that of most of his collaborators. In foreign affairs, he applied the same arguments used to demonstrate the need for a strong state to questions of France's overseas status. In this, too, he became the spokesman of the fervent cold warriors and colonialists within Gaullism. Debré certainly typified the rest of this majority group of Gaullists – among whom can also be found Jacques Soustelle – in that he believed strongly in *Algérie française*. However, his interpretation of the Algerian situation displayed more subtlety than most, in that he recognised that the chief value of defending French Algeria was that to concede defeat would consist of a terrible blow to the state, from which it might not recover. Debré certainly condemned concessions to international pressure, warned of the dangers of communism if Algeria were to be lost, and refused to condemn torture – an example of his conception of reason of

⁸³ E. Michelet, *Contre la guerre civile* (Paris: Plon, 1957)

⁸⁴ P. Samuel, *Michel Debré*, pp. 27-32

state as a key aspect of Gaullism – but it might be argued that he was alone in faithfully representing the 'Doctrine de l'Etat'. Although the majority of Gaullists appear, therefore, to conform to Charlot's third category, through their nationalism, resistance to colonial reform and conservatism, it is necessary to see Debré's case as a slightly separate and more complex manifestation of Gaullism.

The Gaullist movement's support in France has been analysed by Purtschet and by François Goguel.⁸⁵ The RPF's membership, as identified by Purtschet, was principally among the middle and working classes, with a lower than average proportion of intellectuals. Its overall numbers were higher than mainstream political movements and comparable to the Communist Party, a fact which, taken together with the sociological spread of its members, suggests that its principal appealing factors were its direct appeal to the people, the authority and prestige offered by de Gaulle, and its ability to offer an alternative to the Fourth Republic system.⁸⁶ Goguel's analyses of the geographical spread of RPF support have demonstrated that it frequently achieved success in areas not connected with the traditional right, in spite of the political associations of many of its members.⁸⁷ It appears, therefore, that the RPF, like the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF), appealed to sections of the population seeking a form of change or progress; indeed, Goguel has referred to the 'modernity' of the RPF compared to the rest of the centre-right.⁸⁸ While the RPF can correctly be described as a party of the moderate right, it is less accurate to describe it as a traditional or conservative movement simply on the basis of the affiliations of its elected representatives. In the *Union française*, however, the situation was different: the RPF frequently came to be seen as the voice of conservatism. This point will be examined in greater detail in chapters two and three, but in the context of a general study of Gaullist support, the description of the movement's supporters

⁸⁵ F. Goguel, *Géographie des élections françaises sous la troisième et la quatrième république* (Paris: FNSP/Armand Colin, 1970)

⁸⁶ Purtschet, pp. 116-31

⁸⁷ Goguel, *Géographie des élections*, pp. 120-1

⁸⁸ Goguel, p. 120

offered by one prominent figure in the Algerian RPF is revealing: 'd'anciens résistants, mais pas les meilleurs, qui restent dans l'ombre, et les gaullistes de salon qui n'ont rien à voir avec les gaullistes de guerre'.⁸⁹ Other commentators have claimed that, in fact, the RPF outside metropolitan France was entirely dominated by conservatives. Charles-André Julien, for example, describes the 86, 000 membership applications received from the *Union française* in 1947 as a 'ralliement en masse' to defend conservatism.⁹⁰ A similar picture of the appeal of the RPF in the colonies upon its creation, as the voice of the colonial status quo in opposition to left-wing government, is provided in Bourgi's survey of Sub-Saharan Africa.⁹¹ Thus, it is essential to differentiate between metropolitan France and the colonies in any definition of Gaullism and its supporters.

In conjunction with the above overview of the political backgrounds of Gaullists, a more detailed survey of some of the Gaullist movement's leading figures is useful to a study of Gaullism as distinct from de Gaulle himself. The Gaullists who held significant positions in the RPF or RS, or in Fourth Republic governments, and who contributed to the development of Gaullist thinking, will therefore be examined briefly, in order to establish what common points or areas of divergence can be identified. The leading Gaullists during the Fourth Republic were undoubtedly Michel Debré and Jacques Soustelle. Four others are worthy of special interest because of their connections with colonial questions (in addition to Soustelle's significant contribution to Gaullist thinking on Algeria): Gilbert Grandval, Christian Fouchet, General Georges Catroux and Jacques Foccart. Furthermore, four Gaullist leaders can be identified as having special interest in questions of defence and foreign policy: Pierre Koenig, Pierre Billotte, Jacques Chaban-Delmas (all of whom served as Minister of Defence), and Gaston Palewski. Finally, Louis Terrenoire and

⁸⁹ René Vinciguerra, quoted in Purtschet, p. 123

⁹⁰ Julien quoted in Purtschet, p. 123; the membership application figures are those claimed by the RPF and recorded by Purtschet, pp. 122-3

⁹¹ R. Bourgi, *Le Général de Gaulle et l'Afrique noire, 1940-1969* (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1980), pp. 215-8

Roger Frey are important figures because of their role in party organisation, internal cohesion and electoral strategy. It must be noted that Foccart and Soustelle also played a significant part in RPF organisation, while of those mentioned above, Foccart, Terrenoire and Debré might reasonably be said to have been the closest to de Gaulle.

Michel Debré has already been discussed in relation to his place within Gaullist ideology. His role within the Gaullist movement is equally important. Described as being at the heart of all the plots and subversion attempts under the Fourth Republic,⁹² he was certainly more involved than any other Gaullist, with the possible exception of Soustelle, in the discrediting and destruction of the regime. His chief contributions to this were in the form of his articles in *Le Courrier de la Colère* and his parliamentary speeches, while his extensive network of contacts in the military also contributed to his role as one of the leaders of the group of Gaullists with the real potential to bring about the collapse of the Fourth Republic. Debré's chief interest was in the constitution and institutions of France; he worked on drafts of what was to become the constitution of the Fifth Republic throughout his spell in opposition. His belief in national independence made him the leader in the Senate of the Gaullists' attacks on the EDC, the EEC and EURATOM, the proposed European atomic energy project. The same intransigence was later manifested in strong attacks on the United States for interfering in North Africa and thus rendering the Atlantic Alliance meaningless. Despite this, Debré's role in the Gaullist party organisation was smaller than his contribution to policy. He never held high office in the RPF or RS, and indeed was sceptical of what he saw as the RS' excessive willingness to participate in government. He did, however, undertake national projects under the Fourth Republic, notably the creation of the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* and

⁹² Viansson-Ponté, *Les Gaullistes*, pp. 101-7

the presidency of government committees dealing with the Saar and Germany, acting as a senior civil servant as much as a Gaullist.⁹³

The second key figure of Fourth Republic Gaullism is Jacques Soustelle. Like Debré, his influence extended beyond the Gaullist movement. He is chiefly important for his crucial role in the North African crisis from 1955 onwards, which is examined in chapter 7. He served as Governor-General in Algeria in 1955-56, during which time he developed and implemented the doctrine of integration - the complete incorporation of Algeria into France. The significance of this cannot be underestimated, as the May 1958 events in Algiers took place in the name of integration. Soustelle, therefore, is central to any study of Gaullism in North Africa. As one of the first Gaullists to develop a coherent doctrine relating to North Africa after the start of the Algerian War, he was frequently referred to by colleagues, to such an extent that his personal doctrine of integration was for a time barely distinguishable from Gaullist policy in general. Soustelle was also a key figure in the RPF; he was the movement's first Secretary General, and strongly advocated that the movement should seek to establish itself in North Africa. He fell out of favour with de Gaulle after agreeing to hold consultations with a view to forming a government in 1952; from that date onwards he was never the central figure in the Gaullist movement that he had been before. He was not very seriously involved in the RS, having founded a cross-party organisation, the *Union Pour le Salut et le Renouveau de l'Algérie Française* (USRAF), to which he devoted more time, demonstrating that his priorities, unlike those of Debré lay primarily with keeping Algeria French rather than in ensuring the triumph of Gaullism and the return of de Gaulle.⁹⁴

⁹³ Debré's published essays during the Fourth Republic are: *La mort de l'état républicain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947); *La république et son pouvoir* (Paris: Nagel, 1950); *La république et ses problèmes* (Paris: Nagel, 1952); *Ces princes qui nous gouvernent* (Paris: Plon, 1957).

⁹⁴ Soustelle's published works during the Fourth Republic are: *Aimée et souffrante Algérie* (Paris: Plon, 1956); *Le drame algérien et la décadence française: réponse à Raymond Aron* (Paris: Plon, 1957). In addition to Ullmann's biography (note 31), P. Dabiezies, 'Jacques Soustelle', in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle et le RPF*, pp. 95-8, highlights Soustelle's tolerance of reactionary opinion in the RPF. Soustelle's later publications, *L'Espérance trahie, 1958-1961*, (Paris: Editions de

The four Gaullists with most experience of colonial affairs, other than Soustelle, were Gilbert Grandval, Christian Fouchet, Georges Catroux and Jacques Foccart. Grandval was Resident-General in Morocco in 1955, Fouchet was Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs in 1954-55, Catroux was briefly Governor-General in Algeria in 1956, and Foccart was responsible for the *Union française* within the RPF. Grandval belonged to the 'gaullistes de gauche', and his appointment to Morocco was unpopular even with fellow Gaullists, many of whom demanded his removal after only two months in office. He was accused of excessive liberalism, and it is true that the chief reason for his downfall was the number of enemies he made among the colonial civil service and the army. He had previously been Governor, Commissioner and Ambassador to the Saar, and was absent from the main activities of the RPF and RS except during his crucial period in Morocco. Despite his failure there, he can nevertheless be seen as the representative of a liberal trend within Gaullism.

Christian Fouchet, a professional diplomat, was appointed Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs by Pierre Mendès-France in 1954, at the time when the Prime Minister had decided to grant 'internal autonomy' to the Protectorates. Like Grandval, Fouchet portrayed a liberal type of Gaullism, which was not universally accepted in the Gaullist movement, in his dealings with North Africa. His importance in the development of Gaullist policy on North Africa can be seen in the fact that, in 1962, he was appointed by de Gaulle as the first French ambassador to Algeria, charged with reconciliation. General Georges Catroux first came into contact with Gaullism and North Africa in 1943, when, following his role in negotiations with Giraud, he was appointed Minister for North Africa in the Provisional Government. He did not believe as strongly as most Gaullists in *Algérie française*, and in 1943 was influential in the report that recommended the extension of citizenship in Algeria. He was the most liberal member of the RPF *Conseil de Direction*, on which he was often

l'Alma, 1962) and *La page n'est pas tournée* (Paris: La table ronde, 1965) are also useful in understanding Soustelle's attachment to *Algérie française*, along with his memoirs (note 36)

isolated and from which he finally resigned in 1952 over the RPF's policies on Morocco and Tunisia. His liberalism on North African affairs persisted throughout the Fourth Republic, leading to his being declared 'undesirable' in 1953 by General Guillaume, Resident General in Morocco, and in 1955 negotiating the return to Morocco of the deposed, pro-nationalist Sultan. In this context, his appointment to replace Soustelle as Governor-General in Algeria in 1956 caused violent protests among the settlers and he resigned within days. His reputation as one of the most consistently liberal Gaullists on colonial affairs is deserved, and it is interesting that he remained close to de Gaulle throughout the Fourth Republic. Unlike Grandval, Fouchet and Catroux, Jacques Foccart never held ministerial office, but was acknowledged as the RPF's expert on colonial affairs, although his expertise related more to Black Africa than the Maghreb. He edited the *Lettre à l'Union Française* and accompanied de Gaulle on his tours of the colonies in 1953-1957. He presided the RPF's *Commission de l'Union Française*, as well as serving as its Secretary General from 1954 to 1958. His links with the police and security services, dating back to his role in the Second World War, meant that he played a somewhat mysterious role in the events of 1958, and in the Fifth Republic's African policies.

Gaullist foreign and defence policy was best illustrated during the Fourth Republic by the three Gaullist Ministers of Defence, Generals Pierre Koenig (1954 and 1955), Pierre Billotte (1955), and Jacques Chaban-Delmas (1958). Koenig was opposed by some fellow Gaullists for according too much importance to European and Atlantic issues, and by others for being too easily influenced by military pressure.⁹⁵ Billotte had a special interest in strategic questions and was instrumental in the formulation of RPF policy in this area. He was in favour of the Atlantic Alliance, and never a fervent partisan of *Algérie française*; he publicly condemned torture in 1957.⁹⁶ Chaban-Delmas played an important role in May 1958, as it was the *antenne* of the

⁹⁵ The only work on Koenig is the essay by P. Vial in *Militaires en République*, (note 16)

⁹⁶ In addition to *Le Passé au futur* (note 36), Billotte also published *Le Temps du Choix* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1950)

Ministry of Defence that he had established in Algiers that succeeded in turning events there to the Gaullists' advantage. As mayor of Bordeaux and President of the RS from 1954 to 1957, he was the strongest advocate of Gaullist participation in government and co-operation with other parties, although he did incur the wrath of fellow Gaullists for this reason in 1957-58. Opinion is divided on his motives for entering the Gaillard government of 1958, with some claiming that his aim was to undermine the Fourth Republic from within, while others accuse him of betraying Gaullist principles.⁹⁷ In addition, Gaston Palewski can be included in this group because of his interest in and knowledge of foreign and strategic issues; he frequently presented reports on foreign policy at RPF conferences. His experience as a close collaborator of Marshal Lyautey, the chief exponent of the colonial doctrine of the 'civilising mission' in Morocco in the 1920s, also lent him some authority within the Gaullist movement to speak on North African affairs. His chief sphere of official activity during the Fourth Republic was his role in developing the French military nuclear programme, while *Ministre Délégué à la Présidence du Conseil* in 1955. He also influenced Gaullist thinking on the increasingly important question of the Sahara in 1956-58.

Louis Terrenoire and Roger Frey are important due to the roles they played in the organisation of the Gaullist movement. Terrenoire, split with the MRP in 1947 and became RPF Secretary General between 1951 and 1954, and was instrumental during this period in maintaining a reasonably coherent Gaullist group in parliament. His further contribution to the survival and evolution of Gaullism after 1953 was the leading role he played in the defeat of EDC. Although he did not greatly influence Gaullist thinking on North Africa, he appears to have been more aware than most of de Gaulle's changing views on the situation, and in the later years of the Fourth Republic he acted as a mediator and link between different Gaullist groups, while

⁹⁷ Chaban-Delmas' memoirs (note 36) are complemented by *L'Ardeur* (Paris: Stock, 1975), which is equally reticent on the subjects of the Fourth Republic and Algeria.

working for the return of the General.⁹⁸ Roger Frey's contribution to Fourth Republic Gaullism is a smaller one, but no less significant. As General Secretary of the RS from 1955, he was at the centre of most of the plots, conspiracies and activism of the end of the Fourth Republic, working closely with Debré, Soustelle and Foccart in this period. In particular, he was in Algiers in May 1958, overseeing and directing the course of events. His views on Algeria present little of note, but he is of interest for the way in which he demonstrates the vital role that activism and contacts played in Gaullist Algerian policy.

The relationship between de Gaulle himself and the Gaullist movement remains to be examined. Olivier Wieviorka has suggested that de Gaulle's role in the RPF amounted to one of overall direction rather than involvement in the details of policy or party activities.⁹⁹ Along with Soustelle's account of the absence of 'ideological' conflict within the RPF, this account of de Gaulle's leadership appears to confirm that individual Gaullist *responsables* were accorded a considerable amount of freedom in respect of policy and tactics. De Gaulle, however, did attempt to maintain order within the *Rassemblement*, and was concerned that his appointed collaborators should not overstep the limits of their responsibilities, or reinterpret his opinions.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Soustelle's acceptance of the offer from President Vincent Auriol to form a government in January 1952, although ostensibly done in the name of promoting

⁹⁸ In addition to his memoirs of his Gaullist activity (note 37), Terrenoire also published the useful *De Gaulle et l'Algérie: témoignage pour l'histoire* (Paris: Fayard, 1964), which has been influential in the development of the idea that de Gaulle recognised the inevitability of Algerian independence before 1958.

⁹⁹ O. Wieviorka, 'Les dirigeants, Rapport de Synthèse', pp. 90-2

¹⁰⁰ Wieviorka, 'Les dirigeants', p. 91; Examples of de Gaulle notifying colleagues that they had gone beyond the limits of what he considered appropriate behaviour can be found in two rebukes to Soustelle, the first for attending a UDSR meeting, which de Gaulle feared would be interpreted as a sign of Gaullist approval for co-operation with the socialist movement. The second example amounts to a clear statement of how de Gaulle saw his place within the RPF leadership: 'Je répète, une fois de plus, que personne ne peut ni ne doit faire de déclaration à quiconque quant à ce qui me concerne personnellement. Ce que je pense, ce que je fais, ce que je projette, c'est mon affaire. Il n'appartient qu'à moi de le dire ou de le taire. Prière d'en tenir compte absolument et de faire le nécessaire auprès de tous les membres de mes services pour qu'ils se conforment, eux aussi, à cette règle indispensable de convenance et de tactique.' De Gaulle, *Lettres, Notes et Carnets: compléments 1924-1970* (Paris: Plon, 1997, pp. 76 & 78) (De Gaulle to Soustelle, 30.5.1947 & 10.11.1947)

Gaullism, met with the General's disapproval because it represented a significant overstretching, on Soustelle's part, of the responsibilities given to him by de Gaulle as a leader of the Gaullist movement.¹⁰¹

In determining the importance of de Gaulle's public pronouncements on North Africa, it must be remembered that after his withdrawal from the RPF in 1953, the General made only infrequent public appearances, and indeed did not speak publicly at all on colonial affairs between June 30, 1955 and May 19, 1958. It has generally been assumed, nevertheless, as previously mentioned, that Gaullist policy and ideas emanated exclusively from de Gaulle. Their diffusion and reception, however, raise questions about the extent of authority that de Gaulle exercised over different parts of the Gaullist movement in the realm of doctrine. For those Gaullists chiefly motivated by personal loyalty to and admiration for de Gaulle – Charlot and Soustelle's 'Gaullistes de foi' – the writings and speeches of de Gaulle constitute the essence of their political views. This is the case especially for the mass of Gaullist *militants* - party members and local officials. Thus, any statement of policy or ideology from a relatively minor figure in the RPF or RS party hierarchy invariably referred directly to the *oeuvre* of de Gaulle.¹⁰² The existence of a considerable body of work presenting the General's views on virtually every subject certainly facilitated the emergence of a school of thought known as 'Gaullism'. The RPF, indeed, sought to strengthen this ideological cohesion by producing, in 1951, a compilation of de Gaulle's writings and speeches entitled *La France sera la France: ce que veut Charles de Gaulle*.¹⁰³ Intended to become a kind of Gaullist 'bible', twenty thousand copies of this volume were sent to RPF members. It was organised thematically, with

¹⁰¹ For details of the dispute between Soustelle and de Gaulle over this issue, Ullmann, *Jacques Soustelle*, pp. 168-71; Soustelle, *Vingt-huit ans de gaullisme*, 76-8, Charlot, *Le gaullisme d'opposition*, pp. 257-59.

¹⁰² De Gaulle's published work before 1958 consists of: *La discorde chez l'ennemi* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1924); *Le Fil de l'épée* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1932); *Vers l'armée de métier* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1934); *La France et son armée* (Paris: Plon, 1938); *Trois Etudes* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1945); *Mémoires de Guerre*, vol. 1: *L'Appel* (Paris: Plon, 1954) & vol. 2: *L'Unité* (Paris: Plon, 1956).

¹⁰³ Rassemblement du Peuple Français, *La France sera la France: ce que veut Charles de Gaulle* (Paris: Rassemblement du Peuple Français, 1951).

each chapter consisting of extracts from de Gaulle's writings that were thought to present the essence of the General's thought on the subject.

The publication of the first two volumes of de Gaulle's war memoirs in 1954-56¹⁰⁴ added to the body of written work that the General's supporters could scrutinise in search of intellectual guidance. It could be argued that the content of the war memoirs helped focus attention on the international aspects of Gaullism. The second volume, *L'Unité*, especially, dealing with de Gaulle's period in Algiers and the international diplomacy surrounding the North African landings and Allied attitudes to Free France, reinforced the link between North Africa and France's wartime recovery. Published in 1956, it kept de Gaulle in the public sphere and maintained the association of Gaullism and Algeria that had existed within the Gaullist movement since 1943. The effect of the memoirs as a whole, through their immense popular success, was to further develop the image of de Gaulle as saviour in a time of crisis, the same idea that the Gaullists were in the process of developing as part of their strategy for a solution in Algeria and Gaullism's return to power.

¹⁰⁴ The third volume, *Le Salut*, was not published until 1959.

CHAPTER 2

GAULLISM AND THE *UNION FRANÇAISE* TO THE 1951 ELECTIONS: POLICIES, PRIORITIES AND CONTACTS

The Gaullists' reflection on colonial affairs in the early years of the Fourth Republic laid the foundations upon which their reactions to problems in North Africa in the 1950s were based. This chapter will introduce the key themes in Gaullist thinking on colonial questions in the period leading up to the 1951 elections. These are the Gaullists' attitude to the French colonial presence and the question of reform in North Africa, the link between French North Africa and the emerging Cold War geopolitical situation, and North Africa's place in the Gaullists' strategy for electoral victory and de Gaulle's return to power. Reflection on all these subjects took place within the framework of general policy outlined by de Gaulle at Brazzaville and Bordeaux and described in Chapter 1: gradual evolution towards a degree of self-government in the colonies as part of a greater French state along federal lines, with no question of independence for the colonies. The protectorates in Morocco and Tunisia might be expected to be seen as exceptions to this rule – the overall aim of protectorate being to prepare the territories for independence – but in practice Gaullists made little distinction between the protectorates and the colonies, and came to see independence as an unrealistic aim for North Africa, believing that the French influence would simply be replaced by a different type of foreign domination. Likewise Algeria, officially a part of metropolitan France rather than a colony, rarely featured in debates on domestic policy.¹

¹ Morocco and Tunisia tended to be treated by Gaullists as if they were part of the *Union française*. Algeria was technically part of the French element of the *Union française*, rather than a member in its own right, but was generally treated in the same way as the other overseas territories and colonies. The RPF's conferences tended to deal with North Africa as part of the *Union française* section, distinct from domestic affairs. The *Lettre à l'Union Française* clearly saw Algeria and the protectorates as part of its sphere of interest, while the metropolitan Gaullist publications such as *Le Rassemblement* and *L'Étincelle* did not systematically treat Algeria as part of their area of competence, publishing separate Algerian editions. The aim of an inclusive community embracing France and its overseas territories on an equal basis thus seems to have existed more in theory than in practice in the RPF's activities. The RPF therefore displayed the same confusion, and reluctance to see the métropole and the colonies as parts of the same Union, that they condemned in their opponents. Even the new term *Union française* did not signify a significant new departure in colonial thinking, as it failed to replace the idea of Empire in general perceptions. Lacouture describes it thus: 'Ce que

Means of strengthening links between France and the *Union française*

While colonial problems were not the Gaullists' highest priority in the period between 1946 and the 1951 elections, the question of relations between metropolitan France and the colonies was of considerable importance in debate over the new institutions of the Fourth Republic. The issue of links between France and the *Union française* played an important part in Gaullist opposition to the proposed constitution of the Fourth Republic. Throughout the 1950s, Gaullists claimed that the *Union française* was flawed because it failed to provide for colonial representation at levels below the Assemblée Nationale. This analysis had its origins mainly in Debré's critiques of the 1946 constitutional proposals. Debré's thought on colonial issues in the early years of the Fourth Republic displayed a clear emphasis on developing the idea of community already expressed by de Gaulle, through an emphasis on inclusion of the colonies in the Nation as a whole, and local representation for colonial populations.² This community in turn required leadership to be provided by metropolitan France.

The Gaullists envisaged popular representation at a local level in the colonies. In addressing the question of representation – the key to achieving a truly inclusive *Union française* – the RPF stressed that fair representation for colonial populations did not necessarily mean universal suffrage. Announcing that the RPF proposed the creation of representative assemblies in each territory of the *Union française*, Debré cautioned that the distribution of seats and means of election would depend on the 'characteristics of the local population',³ adding that 'Nous ne pensons pas que le suffrage universel soit la panacée à appliquer dès maintenant, automatiquement et uniformément, à tous les pays d'Outre-Mer. Proclamons-en le principe, mais

chacun appelle alors l'Union française sans cesser de penser en termes d'Empire.' J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle, vol. 2: le politique, 1944-1959* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), pp. 343-4

² Michel Debré archives (Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques), 1DE21, *Rapport sur l'Organisation Constitutionnelle et Administrative de l'Union française*, 10.4.1948

³ Debré archives, 1DE21, *Rapport sur l'Organisation...* 10.8.1948

appliquons-le avec discernement'.⁴ For the RPF, change in the colonies was inevitable after the War and Brazzaville, but the essential principle owed much to the traditional French mission to protect and civilise: 'assurer ... les progrès des populations autochtones, les traiter avec justice ...'.⁵ The most pressing issue in the early Fourth Republic was to establish the means of ensuring representation for both native and settler communities, since the franchise had been widened by de Gaulle. In this respect, some willingness to change the existing strict separation of French and native populations can be seen: Debré stated a preference not for the 'double college' system, but rather for what he called a 'pluralité des collèges', allowing for the creation of several different electoral colleges in areas where several distinct ethnic or social communities could be identified.⁶ The creation of unitary assemblies in the colonies was to be avoided, as these would risk giving the colonies a state apparatus that could be used by nationalists to challenge the authority of Paris, a preoccupation that featured strongly in the Gaullists' opposition to the *loi-cadre* proposals for Algeria in 1956-8.

Debré's constitutional ideas inspired Gaullist debate on the problem of modifying the structures of metropolitan institutions to allow the idea of the *Union française* to be fully realised. Thus, another familiar Gaullist theme associated with the end of the Fourth Republic emerged: the need to secure a system of government in Paris that allowed governments the authority to control the pace of reform in the colonies. A central federal structure for the *Union française*, with a *Haut Conseil de l'Union française* made up of representatives of the *Union française* states as well as the government, along with a federal *Conseil des Ministres*, was generally welcomed,

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *ibid*. Areas of the *Union française* that were considered particularly suited to this varied system of involvement in political life were those seen as politically more mature or complex, such as Réunion, the *Etablissements Français des Indes*, and Senegal. The general idea of separation of communities in North Africa persisted until the end of the Fourth Republic in Gaullist thinking, as seen in plans to create different institutions for different groups in Algeria in 1956-8. See for example Palewski's similar plan for Algeria in G. Palewski, 'Une politique pour l'Afrique du Nord', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, 660 (July 1956), pp. 7-17

but many Gaullists were reticent on the question of creating parallel representative institutions and decision-making mechanisms at a local level in the colonies themselves. Even federalism was not universally popular. Raymond Dronne, later a strong supporter of *Algérie française*, claimed to speak for many RPF members in opposing the introduction of federal ministries with responsibility for both the *métropole* and the *Union française*, as well as representation in the Senate for the members of the *Union française*.⁷ Devolution of local powers and creation of local representation, too, were not universally welcomed. The model of the *Union française* that emerged from the RPF's discussions therefore retained a strong central power in Paris, albeit one with the potential to evolve into a federal one. In the *Union française*, however, the local representation on a small scale envisaged by de Gaulle and Debré received only lukewarm and conditional support. Power was to remain firmly in Paris, and it is indeed questionable whether the majority of Gaullists were ever committed to a federal *Union française* to the same extent as the RPF leaders.

Gaullism and conservatism in North Africa

Gaullist plans for stronger constitutional links between France and the *Union française* were an important aspect of long-term planning for reform in the event of an RPF victory in the 1951 elections. In the short term, however, they had to attract support in North Africa in order to establish a Gaullist presence beyond metropolitan France and demonstrate their commitment to the region. The Gaullists' attachment to North Africa as a result of their wartime experience owed as much to the Muslim populations as to the settlers. Indeed, many of the settlers had supported the Vichy regime, particularly in Algeria where its anti-Semitism had been popular, and had little time for de Gaulle. While some Muslims had welcomed the French defeat in 1940, Gaullists focused on the fact that many more had fought in the Free French

⁷ Debré archives, 1DE21, RPF Comité d'Etudes, 1.9.1948. Dronne never held a senior position within the Gaullist movement, despite being one of the RPF and RS' most prolific orators in parliament. His views might be assumed to be closer to those of the mainstream Gaullist supporters than those of the acknowledged policy-makers like Debré and Soustelle, or those of the Gaullists regularly who participated in Fourth Republic government, such as Chaban-Delmas.

armies, and it was this recognition, along with international pressure to implement reform in the colonies, that had led to the limited extension of citizenship and the franchise in Algeria in 1943. The Gaullists, therefore, sought to maximise the benefits of de Gaulle's image as reformer among the North Africans, in order to steer them away from the emerging nationalist parties. Electoral concerns, however, and the need to protect French authority in North Africa against any nationalist or communist advances, also led them to seek support among the settlers. Indeed, the dual college electoral system that made settlers' votes more important than Muslim ones meant the Gaullists were obliged to seek settler support. Thus a difficult compromise was sought, between preserving the important legacy of wartime reforms and reassuring the settlers that a Gaullist government in France would protect their privileges.

The RPF was keen to develop a strong organisation in North Africa, particularly in Algiers.⁸ The main obstacle it faced among the settlers was the fact that the Second World War legacy of Gaullist legitimacy could not be relied upon in North Africa as in metropolitan France. The RPF's electoral behaviour in North Africa reveals its ambivalent attitude to the entrenched conservatism and enduring Pétainism of the European population, while highlighting the problems faced by Gaullism in attempting to live up to the legacy of Brazzaville and continue to represent the aspirations of the colonial populations. The RPF in fact made very little progress among Muslims; the number of Muslim members was regularly exaggerated by the *délégués départementaux* in the reports they sent to headquarters in Paris.⁹

⁸ Soustelle, aware of the movement's limited resources, insisted that for the 1947 elections the two most important cities for Gaullism to win were Paris and Algiers. Fabrice Barthélémy, *Le Gaullisme et l'Algérie au temps du RPF (1947-1955)*, (unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1997), p.15

⁹ Barthélémy, *Le Gaullisme et l'Algérie*, p. 33. The name of de Gaulle certainly retained much prestige among the Muslims, but the General remained relatively distant from North African Gaullism, perhaps in recognition of the fact that the RPF in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia contained as many former antigaullists as *anciens résistants*.

Given the value of Gaullism's reforming reputation, some Gaullist leaders in France were uncomfortable with the tendency of some of the most conservative and reactionary elements of colonial society to join the RPF,¹⁰ attracted by its anticommunism and emphasis on strong central government. However, their reluctance to co-operate with more moderate forces in electoral alliances prevented the RPF from widening its support in North Africa. In contrast to an alliance of parties, the RPF claimed to offer 'une véritable union... des Français et des musulmans',¹¹ echoing its emphasis, in metropolitan France, on national unity rather than the short-lived and unstable political alliances that the Fourth Republic's electoral laws had produced. In one exception to this policy, Gaullists in Algiers proposed that the RPF should produce a 'common manifesto' for the 1951 campaign, with the collaboration of Muslim figures known for their authority and their pro-French sentiment. Yet this plan was designed not to appeal to the Muslims but to calm the settlers' fears concerning de Gaulle's popularity among the Muslims,¹² and therefore to allow the Gaullists to win *pied-noir* support. In practice, the 1951 campaign saw the Gaullists' ideas concerning Franco-Muslim unity somewhat sidelined by the disputes among the Europeans about the legitimacy of Gaullism.

The RPF in Morocco, like in Algeria, had trouble establishing itself on the basis of the Gaullist war legacy, and was generally identified as the voice of conservative opinion. Moreover, internal disputes among the Europeans who made up the bulk of the North African RPF undermined the movement's cohesion. As early as 1948, François Marrier, an RPF organiser in Fès, highlighted the key fault-line that was emerging in the movement:

J'ai œuvré aux côtés des promoteurs du mouvement à Fès avant que ne viennent s'y joindre ceux qui furent des antigaullistes à l'époque de Vichy

¹⁰ The RPF membership in Algeria has been described as 'recrutés parmi les éléments les plus rétrogrades de la population européenne.' H. Lerner, *Catroux* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990), p. 298

¹¹ RPF archives (Paris: Fondation Charles de Gaulle), Dossier Algérie, BR.42, Yaffi to Soustelle, 16.10.1950

¹² RPF archives, Dossier Algérie, BR.42, Yaffi to Soustelle, 16.10.1950

...J'ai toujours été un des admirateurs du Général de Gaulle et j'accepte difficilement une gestion du mouvement par ceux qui dirigent actuellement au Maroc.¹³

The majority of active RPF members in Morocco, however, were to be found on the conservative side of the divide, with attempts to impose unity behind a 'Paris' line sidelined in favour of consolidating the movement's membership and electoral strength. One of the most important groups targeted by the Gaullists in North Africa was *militaires* and *anciens combattants*. This strategy was not merely a local initiative in Algiers, but was sanctioned by party leaders in Paris, despite the Pétainism of most North African soldiers and veterans. At the 1950 *Assises*, the RPF called for *anciens combattants* overseas to be granted the same state benefits as those in metropolitan France, and for improved conditions of service for military personnel overseas.¹⁴ RPF Secretary-General Louis Terrenoire was particularly active in the defence and promotion of *anciens*' *combattants* rights, and maintained regular contact with the *Fédération des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre du Maroc*.¹⁵

The 1951 elections were the first test of the RPF's success in appealing to generally antigauillist voters. The Gaullists had already begun to address the legacy of the Second World War in a largely Pétainist community, after the Rémy affair of 1950. Colonel Rémy, the chief secret agent of Free France and a close friend of de Gaulle, published an article in the Gaullist-supporting newspaper *Carrefour*, in which he claimed that in 1940 France had needed both Pétain and de Gaulle - the Marshal as the shield and the General as the sword.¹⁶ Furthermore, he insisted that he was expressing the views of de Gaulle himself. Despite the latter's firm denial and Rémy's resignation from the *Conseil National* of the RPF, the link between Pétainism and Gaullism had been clearly stated and a sensitive subject opened to public debate. The

¹³ RPF archives, Dossier Maroc, 51/4, Marrier to Soustelle, 17.12.1948

¹⁴ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales* de Paris, *Union française* section, November 1950

¹⁵ RPF archives, Maroc, 51/4.2, dossier 'Anciens Combattants', Terrenoire to Jacquinot, 27.4.1950.

¹⁶ Rémy in *Carrefour*, 11.4.1950

Gaullists recognised the electoral value of attempting to 'assimilate' Pétain to the prestige of de Gaulle and Free France.¹⁷ For settlers - *piets-noirs* - resentful about the Fourth Republic's appropriation of the metropolitan war record, the Rémy affair was seen as a vindication. According to the influential settler newspaper *L'Echo d'Alger*, Rémy had made possible national unity, by recognising that Pétainists and Résistants were both motivated by the restoration of French grandeur.¹⁸

The 1951 elections also coincided with the final months of Pétain's life, as calls for grace became increasingly frequent in the conservative press, especially in Algeria. RPF publications abandoned earlier articles in praise of the spirit of resistance as incarnated by the Free French, and shifted their emphasis to the theme of national unity.¹⁹ Louis Terrenoire tabled a motion in parliament calling for the release of Pétain from his detention on the Ile d'Yeu, Pétain's lawyer, Jacques Isorni, stood for election on the RPF list in Paris, and de Gaulle himself criticised the government's treatment of Pétain.²⁰ In France, the RPF's attempt to create national unity in the face of a presumed communist threat lay behind these tactics; in North Africa, however, the RPF was also attempting to appeal to the settlers whose votes were so important to Gaullism's implantation in the region.

The 1951 elections failed to deliver a Gaullist government. The RPF won the largest number of seats but, with only 21.7% of the vote and a commitment to avoid alliances with other parties, was resigned to a further parliamentary term out of office. The Gaullists concluded from the election results that they would never be

¹⁷ Rémy's crime, in this context, was not to raise a delicate subject, but rather, to claim to speak for de Gaulle without the General's prior permission.

¹⁸ *L'Echo d'Alger*, 13.4.1950. The newspaper's editor, Alain de Sérigny, played a crucial role in ensuring the return of de Gaulle in May 1958, dramatically rallying to Gaullism and delivering *piet-noir* support to the Gaullists.

¹⁹ Parallels can be seen with the Gaullists scaling down their attacks on Giraud and Vichy in 1943 when the immediate imperative in Algiers was unity behind the joint heads of the provisional government.

²⁰ See for example C. de Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, vol. 2: *dans l'attente 1946-1958* (Paris: Plon, 1970) pp. 280-81 (Press Conference, 29.3.1949)

able to hold office under the Fourth Republic's system of proportional representation and coalition government. After the elections, Gaullists in North Africa made less effort to court *pied-noir* opinion, until 1958, but they continued to support conservative policies, defending the French position and the settlers' privileges and attacking nationalism. One of the casualties of the 1951 election campaign in North Africa was, therefore, Gaullism's short-lived popularity among the Muslims as a reforming movement in the spirit of the resistance and the provisional government.²¹ Gaullism in North Africa had failed to develop into the kind of popular movement that was growing in metropolitan France; chief among the reasons for this was surely that its frequent association with the defenders of the colonial status quo, business leaders, the military and former Pétainists prevented it from establishing a foothold in a Muslim community already susceptible to nationalist propaganda.

North Africa and France's International Position: Defence, Security and Sovereignty

The wartime reforms that the Gaullists hoped would win Muslim support had been enacted partly in response to international events. American pressure on European colonial powers to move towards decolonisation, at the end of the Second World War, had been followed by Soviet encouragement of anticolonial movements as the Cold War began. The Gaullists' concerns thus shifted from allowing some reforms, in order to avoid criticism from France's allies, to preventing any nationalist gains that could be put to the service of communism. The RPF's fierce anticommunism in domestic politics was mirrored by its opposition to nationalism in North Africa; both communism and anticolonialism were thought to have an international dimension,

²¹ De Gaulle retained personal prestige among colonial populations – as the reception he generally received on his tours of the colonies in the mid-1950s demonstrated – but the Gaullist movement in general never succeeded in presenting itself as a voice of reform after 1951. The well-documented rallying of the Algerian Muslims to de Gaulle in 1958 can be attributed to the General's personal popularity, and even to his relative distance from the conservatism of much Fourth Republic Gaullism.

operating for the benefit of a foreign power.²² In the case of French communism, the real threat was clearly the Soviet Union, whereas in North Africa, Gaullists were for a time unsure as to whether the nationalist movements were being directed by communists in Moscow or Arab nationalists in Egypt. In this climate, even allied calls for further reforms became unwelcome, as the Gaullists increasingly saw the United States and Britain as interfering in French North Africa, not in the interests of the Muslim populations but for their own economic or strategic purposes. Despite the supposed common cause of Western nations in the Cold War, British and American interests did not necessarily match those of France, given the Gaullists' belief, based on their wartime experience, that French control of North Africa was the only means to ensure national security and to give France hope for survival in the case of attack in Europe.²³

The Second World War had convinced Gaullists of North Africa's importance for French and European security. From the government's attempt to retreat to Algeria in 1940, through the Allied landings of 1942 to the establishment of de Gaulle's provisional government in Algiers in 1943, the Second World War offered evidence that North Africa could play a vital role in the event of further threats to metropolitan France. In addition, the importance that Gaullists attached to sub-Saharan Africa as the first part of the Empire to rally to Gaullism strengthened their argument for North Africa's importance: without firm control in North Africa, France's strategic,

²² The RPF was for a time associated with violent anticommunism. In the early years of the Fourth Republic, RPF or PCF rallies frequently witnessed violence between supporters of the two parties, particularly in the so-called 'Red Belt' in the Paris suburbs, which was targeted by the RPF. De Gaulle's tours in the provinces often attracted extreme-right sympathisers. In Grenoble in 1948, a young communist was killed in fighting at an RPF rally. Throughout the 1950s, the RPF youth movements continued to recruit members on the basis of a strong appeal to direct action against communism. Anticommunism was the common theme in the *rapprochement* of RPF and extreme-right students, which sometimes resulted in Gaullists appearing on joint electoral lists with royalists at a local level, and it remained an appealing characteristic of Gaullism for those attracted by its potential for direct action, described by one historian as 'Gaullistes de choc'. See O. Dard, 'Jalons pour une histoire des étudiants nationalistes sous la IV^{ème} République', *Historiens et Géographes*, 358, (July-August 1997), pp. 249-62

²³ Since the late 1940s, the onset of the Cold War had led de Gaulle, in particular, to fear an imminent third world war.

political and economic links with the rest of the continent would be weakened. The rational argument for North Africa's vital contribution to French security, therefore, acquired added weight for Gaullists through its association with their more mystical attachment to the idea of national regeneration based on the Free French wartime experience. Consequently, any threat to French North Africa that could be identified with third-party interference – such as that of the Arab League, the USSR or the United States – became an object of Gaullist concern, combining North African nationalism with the fear of escalating Cold War conflicts.

Gaullist fears that North Africa had become the target for outside influences had been growing since 1950. In March of that year, the Moroccan RPF became aware of contacts in Cairo between Moroccan nationalist leaders and Abd-el-Krim, head of the *Comité de Libération de l'Afrique du nord*,²⁴ in which the Arab League had promised to devote its attention to Morocco once Libyan independence had been achieved.²⁵ Gaullist fears of internationalisation of North African nationalist activities were confirmed by a further report that Abd-El-Krim had sent an envoy from the *Comité de Libération* to discuss with the newly independent Indonesian government.²⁶ The international dimension of anticolonial movements was thus demonstrated to Gaullists for the first time, and was to prove one of their chief preoccupations in the crisis in North Africa throughout the Fourth Republic. By April 1950, the RPF in Morocco had acquired evidence which it saw as proof that the three countries in French North Africa were now under orders from the Arab League to combat the *Union française*.²⁷ Unrest was spreading from one area to another, such

²⁴ RPF archives, Dossier Maroc, 51/1, 'Note de renseignements. Influence de la Ligue Arabe au Maroc. Activité du Comité de Libération du Caire'. s.d. (March-April 1950)

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ *ibid*. The Indonesian connection was particularly worrying for Gaullists because of the way in which the Indonesian nationalists had won independence by successfully attracting the attention of the international community to their dispute with the Netherlands, culminating in the United Nations' resolution calling for Dutch withdrawal. Throughout the Fourth Republic, the Indonesian precedent was evoked by Gaullists concerned about internationalisation of the situation in North Africa, usually in an attempt to persuade French governments to resist international pressure.

²⁷ RPF archives, Dossier Maroc, 51/1, *Note de renseignements*, 28.4.1950, 'Événements extérieurs et leurs influences sur le Maroc'

as a student strike in Tunisia that had inspired similar protests in Morocco, and the nationalists were growing in confidence. The acceleration of North African nationalist activity, especially its international dimension, combined with the presence in Paris of governments either unable to prevent this or simply focused on other problems, seemed to represent a real threat to the integrity of the *Union française*.²⁸

North Africa, however, had not yet attained the absolute priority status in Gaullist foreign policy that it reached during the Algerian War. Senior Gaullists were principally concerned, in the early years of the 4th Republic, with European security, which was accorded higher priority than the colonies.²⁹ RPF defence policy, for example, in contrast to future Gaullist views on European security³⁰ stressed the importance of developing an effective European defence organisation within the Atlantic alliance. The role of North Africa in Gaullist defence policy was to ensure that any system of alliance put in place was as effective in the Mediterranean as in continental Europe. The Atlantic Pact, Gaullists insisted, would need to extend beyond Europe, whereas the existing treaties neglected Africa, thereby giving an advantage to the USSR.³¹ The solution to this problem was to be French leadership in the organisation of European defence, in order to guarantee adequate protection of the Mediterranean theatre.³² The idea of a Soviet threat to Western Europe coming through the *Union française*, particularly North Africa – a key part of Gaullist North

²⁸ The process by which the metropolitan Gaullist movement became aware of these problems in Morocco also reveals the extent to which they had allowed the RPF in Morocco to become the voice of settler resistance to any nationalist activity.

²⁹ Debré, for example, having been instrumental in the creation of an RPF *Commission Administrative d'Etude pour l'Organisation Politique et Economique de l'Union française* in 1947, found himself apologising by late 1948 for having become so preoccupied with the Saar and Germany that he had been able to take part only occasionally in the Commission's business. The Commission itself also rapidly sidelined North Africa in order to concentrate on Indochina. Debré archives, IDE21.

³⁰ For a discussion of the role of problems in North Africa in altering Gaullist defence policy, see Ch 4 below.

³¹ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, 'Rapport Général sur la Défense Nationale', November 1950. The Soviet threat in Africa was not necessarily thought to be a direct military one; the Gaullists were more concerned about Soviet aid to anticolonial movements.

³² RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, November 1950

African policy in 1954-58 – was therefore already a matter of concern for the RPF, but the solution, in 1950, lay in the strengthening and extension of alliances made with Europe in mind, rather than in prioritisation of North Africa over the Western Alliance. The threat to the *Union française* was seen as symptomatic of West European vulnerability rather than as a problem principally concerning France and to be dealt with as a matter of national importance. The shift in perceptions towards the latter analysis did not occur until after 1953, when the immediacy of the Cold War threat had faded.

The Gaullists' focus on Europe ahead of North Africa owed much to their belief that nationalism was only a minority movement, generated by foreign interference in French affairs. Nationalist activity could, therefore, be treated as a matter for foreign policy, while France developed the *Union française* as a symbol of commitment to its colonial mission. To give in to nationalism would be to betray loyal populations, as the Moroccan Gaullists argued: 'La masse de la population qui verrait avec terreur notre départ, ne comprend pas notre faiblesse et en cherche en vain la cause ... nous sommes en train de perdre le Maroc parce que, à Paris, personne ne connaît le Maroc'.³³ Given that nationalists in North Africa were therefore not to be seen in any way as representative of majority opinion, the Gaullists insisted that, rather than considering negotiating with nationalist leaders, France should deal only with the sovereigns of Morocco and Tunisia. This argument, however, demonstrated their limited awareness of the strength of nationalism, as Mohammed V was already sympathetic to the Moroccan nationalist *Istiqlal* party. In Algeria, the Gaullists would not admit even the possibility of dealing with any local representatives about the future of the territory; de Gaulle's reforms of 7 March 1944 had fixed Algeria's status once and for all. Indeed, after the 1951 elections, Algeria barely featured in Gaullist activities or statements until the outbreak of the rebellion in 1954. Political

³³ RPF archives, Maroc, 51/1, Suffren to Soustelle, 15.8.1951

‘evolution’ was not ruled out, but it was to focus on the development of institutions that would accelerate the Muslims’ integration into France.³⁴

³⁴ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris, Motion sur l’Afrique du Nord*, November 1950

CHAPTER 3

GAULLISM AND THE MOROCCAN AND TUNISIAN PROBLEMS, 1951-54

After the 1951 elections, with Algeria thought to be free of nationalist unrest, the Gaullists' attention in North Africa was focused on the growing challenge to French authority in Morocco and Tunisia. Though frequently divided on the question of participation in government after the defeat of 1951, the Gaullist movement managed to maintain a greater degree of unity where foreign and colonial policies were concerned. From 1951 to 1954, the Gaullists trod a careful path between advocating reform and authoritarianism in the protectorates, while consistently stressing the need for any solution to the problems posed by nationalism to be a purely French one. Indeed, it might be said that more attention was paid to the international dimensions of the North African problem – the roles of the Arab League, the United States, and the United Nations – than to specific plans for the future of the protectorates. This chapter will examine the Gaullists' views on the international dimensions of North African nationalism, the extent of Gaullist organisation among the settler communities in Morocco and Tunisia, and their attempts to propose solutions to the problems in the protectorates. In particular, the state of Gaullism in Morocco and Tunisia provides a valuable opportunity to address the question of Gaullism's strength and attitudes in North Africa, and North African Gaullism's ability to influence overall Gaullist policy, in a period when a relatively well-organised Gaullist movement still existed. In Algeria, in contrast, such a study of overseas Gaullism is less feasible for the period after 1951, as the electoral defeat saw the end of Gaullist attempts to cultivate support among traditionally antigaulist *pieds-noirs* through developing often-fragile alliances.

Gaullist fears aroused: the Protectorates and the international community, 1951-54

In December 1951, RPF deputy Raymond Dronne expressed concern about the consequences of Libyan independence for French North Africa.¹ January 1952 saw the beginning of Tunisian nationalist attempts to involve the United Nations in the settlement of the Tunisian question.² The Gaullists saw this as principally the fault of the French government, whose announcement, in December 1950, that its long-term aim was Tunisian independence was seen as the cause of the Moroccan and Tunisian nationalists' interest in taking their case to the UN. Gaullists consistently harassed the government whenever a debate on North Africa at the UN was approaching: in October 1952, Foccart demanded to know what the government intended to do 'pour éviter une évocation de l'affaire tunisienne qui serait un précédent mortellement dangereux pour notre présence en Afrique du Nord comme pour l'Afrique du Nord elle-même.'³ One of their most frequently used tactics, intended to demonstrate the invalidity of the UN's case, was to attack the states who raised the Tunisian question in New York. Thus in June 1952, the Pakistani championing of the Tunisian cause provoked a detailed report in the *Lettre à l'Union Française* of the extent of repression in Pakistan, contrasted with the benefit for Tunisia of French protectorate status, while the *Courrier d'Information politique* argued that Tunisia's other allies, such as Egypt, India and Iraq, could hardly be seen as model states.⁴ Similar tactics were used to discredit American anticolonialism, highlighting the American

¹ Dronne, *Assemblée Nationale* (henceforth *AN*), 29.12.1951, *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (henceforth *JORF*). Dronne returned to this theme the following year, insisting that the new Libyan state was a threat to the French presence (*JORF*, 5.6.1952), while the Gaullist deputy for Oran, Quilici, saw a dangerous precedent for French North Africa in the departure of Italians from independent Libya. (*JORF*, 5.6.1952). In addition, the province of Fezzan was attached to the new Libyan state when, at the end of the Second World War, de Gaulle's government had hoped for the incorporation of Fezzan into Algeria and protested that a non-French presence in the area could be prejudicial to security on the Algerian border.

² In contrast to the Gaullists' repeated assertions that a coalition of Arab states was systematically raising the North African question at the UN, the devolved Tunisian government itself actually made the approach to the UN in January 1952, while the first resolution passed on Morocco, in December 1952, was in fact proposed by Brazil. The protectorates were, however, always supported by those Arab states that were already independent. M.C. Smouts, *La France à l'ONU : premiers rôles et second rang* (Paris : Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1979), pp. 230-9

³ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 153 (2.10.1952)

⁴ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 137 (5.6.1952); *Courrier d'Information politique*, 8 (October 1952)

treatment of blacks and natives, and American policy in South America, in contrast with the traditional French mission of inclusiveness.⁵ Thus, according to Fouchet, 'l'inscription de l'affaire tunisienne à l'ordre du jour de l'ONU est une atteinte à notre dignité de puissance protectrice... C'est aussi une atteinte à la présence française dans toute l'Afrique comme c'est une atteinte à l'Afrique elle-même'.⁶

Along with Fouchet's strong rebuttal of the competence of the Arab League or the UN to speak for the Moroccans and Tunisians went a further attack on American and British strategic interests in Morocco,⁷ condemning 'l'action menée contre la France en Afrique du Nord avec le concours de certains gouvernements et, parfois, la complaisance de certains alliés'.⁸ Although the RPF had not yet definitively adopted an anti-Atlanticist stance in defence policy, Fouchet nevertheless refused to accept the Allies' argument that the strategic interest of Morocco for the West as a whole should take priority over French interests, emphatically stating that 'le Maroc n'est pas destiné à être le Gibraltar américain'.⁹ Anti-American or anti-Atlanticist attitudes to foreign and defence policy were beginning to interact with the RPF's policies on the future of North Africa. Indeed, as early as April 1951, Foccart wrote that only the presence in Morocco of General Juin – a *pied-noir* and conservative – as Resident-General was preventing the strategic importance of the territory from becoming a pretext for the opening up of Moroccan affairs to international consideration. The United States, United Nations and the Arab League were all identified as having much to gain from the removal of Juin from Morocco and the damage to French authority that it was assumed his departure would cause.¹⁰ Therefore, Juin's appointment as Commander in Chief of NATO forces in Central Europe was viewed

⁵ *Courrier d'Information politique*, 8 (October 1952)

⁶ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, C. Fouchet, 'Afrique du Nord et Tunisie: la politique Franco-Tunisienne', 9-11.11.1951

⁷ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales*, 1951, C. Fouchet, 'Afrique du Nord et Monde Arabe', 9-11.11.1951

⁸ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales*, 1951, Motion on North Africa, 9-11.11.1951

⁹ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales*, 1951, Fouchet speech, 9-11.11.1951

¹⁰ The Moroccan question was first raised at the UN in November 1951, though the first resolution on Morocco was not passed until December 1952.

by Gaullists not as a welcome hand on the controls of the Western Alliance, but rather as a potential threat to the French presence in North Africa.

The Gaullists' concerns about American influence in the protectorate – Mohammed V was known to have received encouragement from President Roosevelt during the Second World War for an independent Morocco – influenced their attacks on the government's perceived weakness. An American threat to French sovereignty was seen in demands for air bases and guaranteed rights for American citizens.¹¹ In September 1951, Gaston Palewski challenged foreign minister Schuman on the subject of American bases in the protectorate,¹² refuting the government's argument that the bases were merely an operational detail of the Atlantic Pact, and forcing the government to make a statement to the effect that the bases in question were in fact responsible directly to Washington rather than to NATO, despite remaining nominally under French control.¹³ This admission on the part of the government was seen by the RPF as a vindication of its policy of constant harassment of the authorities over the issue of whether Western security interests alone justified the American presence in Morocco. Furthermore, in line with Gaullist views on interdependence between France and the overseas territories, the concept of

¹¹ The dispute with the United States over Morocco arose from the rights accorded to Americans by the 1856 Treaty of Meknès, including exemption from fiscal, military and judicial obligations. In 1947, the Resident-General ended Americans' tax-free status on imports, on the pretext that the *Istiqlal* independence movement had promised to extend Americans' economic privileges in return for aid from the United States in the independence campaign. Thus the removal of Americans' economic privileges on these grounds was presented by the Resident General as an action taken in the name of the defence of French sovereignty. One of the most fervent advocates of the need to reduce American privileges in order to safeguard its sovereignty was the Gaullist senator, Gabriel Puaux. In October 1950, France brought the dispute to the International Court of Justice, which concluded in August 1952 that the United States retained the freedom to develop economic interests in Morocco, although France was entitled to claim authority concerning import laws. The court's decision was welcomed by Moroccan nationalists, who saw in it a rejection of French claims to exclusive authority over all economic activity in Morocco. For the United States, the most significant factor in the whole dispute was the concern with securing strategic bases in Morocco, which were considered crucial to Western security. A Franco-American bilateral agreement on this issue alone was signed in December 1950, although the French government insisted that this in no way amounted to its consent to American interests in Morocco. Samya El Machat, *Les Etats-Unis et le Maroc: le choix stratégique 1945-1959* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), pp. 16-22

¹² In July 1951, it had been agreed that the United States should have seven air bases in Morocco.

¹³ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 98 (6.9.51)

independence was portrayed as a rather meaningless one for Morocco and Tunisia; only larger nations like France could achieve true independence, while the emerging African nations should be encouraged to aspire to interdependence as part of a greater community. Gaullists went as far as to dismiss the very concept of independence for colonies as 'Anglo-Saxon' – devised by America and Britain and therefore of little relevance to the unique French sense of a colonial mission.

Morocco: Gaullist responses to nationalism, 1951-54

The Gaullists felt that, in the absence of a mass nationalist movement, the essential problems in Morocco were the international dimension of debate over the protectorate's future, and the apparent loss of French authority that could be seen in any concessions to international or nationalist opinion.¹⁴ In addition, it was felt that Morocco's existing relations with France provided ample opportunity to minimise the appeal of nationalism without any need for far-reaching changes. The history of the French protectorate was interpreted as offering a framework for change; the *Lettre à l'Union Française*, for example, devoted considerable space to articles in praise of Marshal Lyautey, founder of the Protectorate in 1912.¹⁵ Lyautey was a figure of great symbolic importance for Gaullists. They particularly admired his emphasis on the dominant role of the State in directing national projects, such as his attempt to create a new style of colonial regime in Morocco.¹⁶ Lyautey's aims of governing Morocco with respect for the Moroccan population and curbing the excesses of settler colonialism also appealed to the Gaullists, who attached great importance to notions of interdependence, association, and gradual evolution of

¹⁴ The Gaullists underestimated the strength of Moroccan nationalism. Nationalist societies had existed since the 1930s, the *Istiqlal* (independence) party had been formed in 1944 and had been steadily gathering support since 1947.

¹⁵ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 169 (22.1.1953) & 172 (12.2.1953)

¹⁶ On Lyautey's policies in Morocco, see A. Le Révérend, *Lyautey* (Paris: Fayard, 1983); A. Scham, *Lyautey in Morocco: Protectorate Administration 1912-1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

colonial populations within a protective French framework. Their admiration for Lyautey also reveals the lasting appeal of the civilising mission in the post-war era.¹⁷

The commemoration of the Second World War victory, in May 1953, provided a further opportunity to evoke Morocco's glorious past in partnership with France, as Foccart praised the contribution of Moroccans, and particularly Berbers, to the French expeditionary corps in Italy.¹⁸ The question of the Berbers, central to much French colonial discourse that sought to demonstrate the non-existence of Moroccan or Algerian nations, was gaining importance as a weapon with which to combat Moroccan nationalism.¹⁹ The idea that the Berbers were more reliable, or pro-French, than the Arabs in Morocco dated back to the beginnings of the Protectorate. Indeed, French attempts to regulate Berber law and distance the Berbers from Islam in 1930, in order to strengthen their attachment to France, had provoked nationalist feelings, united Arabs and Berbers in condemnation of the proposal and led the Sultan also to condemn the French attempt to exploit Morocco's supposed racial division.²⁰ In the 1950s, with nationalist activity increasing, the Gaullists acknowledged that the South of the protectorate, along with the desert areas of most of North Africa, effectively lay outside the direct control of the administration, and that order and loyalty in those areas were consequently only maintained through the co-operation of the Berber chiefs to whom the people felt allegiance. The loyal Berber was thus frequently contrasted with the troublesome Arab in French perceptions of the Moroccan people. In parliament, the Gaullist senator for Algiers, Léon Muscatelli, developed this theme of distinguishing between Arabs and Berbers, by claiming that the Berbers were more closely linked to the West than the Arabs, that France's Arab policy

¹⁷ Lyautey's aims of peaceful coexistence of the Moroccan and French communities were in fact seldom achieved, as the investment needed to modernise Morocco led to colonial exploitation and large-scale French immigration as seen in Algeria.

¹⁸ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 185 (13.5.1953)

¹⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 185 (13.5.1953)

²⁰ On the question of French attempts to oppose nationalism by pointing out supposed differences between Arabs and Berbers, throughout the colonial period in North Africa, see P. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities : stereotyping, prejudice and race in colonial Algeria* (London: Taurus, 1995).

therefore had little relevance to its North African policies, and that the populations of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia therefore had a 'Western vocation'.²¹ Thus, the international dimensions of the Moroccan problem – reduced by Gaullists, when convenient, to Arabic interference – could be put to the service of attempts to minimise the extent of the threat posed by nationalism in Morocco.

In August 1953, the French authorities in Morocco deposed the Sultan, Sidi Mohammed, who was openly supporting the nationalists. This was supposedly done in response to calls from the opposition led by the Pacha of Marrakech, Si T'hami El Glaoui,²² demonstrating the French reliance on the alleged Arab-Berber divide in Morocco. El Glaoui's campaign against the Sultan, which served the interests of the French administration very well, began with a petition in favour of the Sultan's replacement. Despite their support for conservative policies in Morocco, the Gaullist reaction to this policy was somewhat unexpected. Foccart immediately reminded the French government of its obligation – under the protectorate treaty signed by Lyautey – to protect the Sultan and therefore ignore the petition, while Catroux declared that the case against the Sultan was entirely invalid.²³ The question of the validity of the Sultan's removal and the wisdom of encouraging the indigenous tribal opposition divided French politics, many Gaullists apparently siding with the Sultan's supporters. Lyautey's legacy, in this case, proved more valuable to Gaullists than their more recent association with colonial conservatism and their identification

²¹ Muscatelli, *Conseil de la République* (henceforth CR), 20.12.1951, *JORF*. Muscatelli also felt that the Berbers had never achieved the same degree of civilisation as the Arabs, presumably a justification for the continuation of the French protectorate.

²² General Guillaume was Resident-General at this stage, though Juin is widely acknowledged to have been responsible for engineering the situation whereby the petition against the Sultan appeared to come from El Glaoui. The Pacha of Marrakech was the supreme tribal chief of the Moroccan South, whose support the French valued greatly. He was also very conservative in political and social matters, and therefore encouraged the French to proceed with the removal of the liberal, pro-nationalist Sultan. Personal ambition also played a part in El Glaoui's behaviour, but his opposition to nationalism, and the desire to keep peace in the South, led the French to accept him as a valuable ally in their attempt to maintain authority. On the relationship between the French authorities in Morocco and El Glaoui, see G. Maxwell, *Lords of the Atlas: The Rise and Fall of the House of Glaoua 1893-1956* (London: Century, 1983), pp. 153-265

²³ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 189 (11.6.1953)

with attempts to support Berber attempts to undermine Arab rule. Thus, the Gaullists' dilemma of wishing to appear at once firm on the question of authority in the colonies and flexible on questions of policy arose once again. The risks incurred in deposing the Sultan were considered greater than those entailed in trying to limit the extent of reform while maintaining the possibility of dealing with a recognised authority in Morocco. The replacement of the Sultan was seen as too big a risk; the Gaullists were aware of the likely consequences on both Moroccan nationalism and international opinion of such obvious interference in the spirit of the protectorate.

Within a few weeks of the installation of the new, puppet Sultan, ben Arafa, the Gaullist press insisted that he did not represent the future of Morocco, and that moderate reforms must continue. The government's chief concern should be to win over the Moroccan youth and intellectuals, a task made all the more difficult by the French support for the voice of tradition and conservatism in the shape of El Glaoui.²⁴ The Gaullists realised that the nationalist movement had arisen out of a desire for modernity, as well as frustration with French rule, and it was hoped that a French emphasis on modernisation and renewal would effectively counteract the nationalists. While the Gaullists undoubtedly underestimated the simple appeal and importance of national feeling in Morocco, they nevertheless showed awareness of the danger posed by a policy of steadfast refusal to change.

As has been seen, the RPF's views on Morocco were not entirely hostile to all reform, although it is true that in the period between June 1951 and summer 1954, calls for reform were less frequent and less vocal than Gaullist demands that the status quo be maintained, other than on the issue of the Sultan. One of those apparently advocating some degree of reform in Morocco was in fact one of the movement's more senior figures, Michel Debré. Debré believed that France's

²⁴ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 199 (3.9.1953). Further evidence of Gaullist division over the dynastic question is provided by Catroux's leading role in facilitating the return of the deposed Sultan in 1955, as will be seen in chapter 6 (pp. 143-4).

problems in Morocco stemmed from the fact that the necessary reforms had not been introduced, thereby creating more serious troubles for the future, arguing that: 'il faudra accepter des réformes qui seront plus difficiles car on les aura différés'.²⁵ Yet despite Debré's apparent interest in reform for the sake of ensuring peace in Morocco, no concrete plans appear to have been advanced – Debré was at this time preoccupied with questions of Germany, the Saar and Europe – and there was certainly no united attempt in the name of the RPF to impose a policy of reform in Morocco.

The support that the idea of reform enjoyed in Paris tended to be undermined by the conservatism of the RPF in Morocco and by the relatively low priority accorded to Morocco in overall Gaullist policy. In late 1951 and early 1952, Jacques Baumel, one of the founding members of the RPF and generally seen as being on the left of the Gaullist movement, undertook a detailed survey of the state of the RPF in Morocco. His report does not present the Moroccan federations as a powerful voice in favour of reform. The *délégué fédéral*, Valabrègue, was seen as not in control of the membership, and having succeeded in attracting support only among former Pétainists.²⁶ The local federations in Casablanca and Rabat were composed largely of conservatives, civil servants, active Catholics and *militaires*, while in Meknès the military element of the RPF was so substantial that most of the members attended meetings in uniform. *Anciens Combattants* also occupied a prominent place, such as in Casablanca where the President of the local veterans' association, Pinel, was the dominant personality on the RPF electoral list. Baumel saw the dominance of conservatives and *militaires* as a damaging factor for Moroccan Gaullism – though there is no indication as to whether his views were shared by leaders in Paris – while lamenting the fact that Valabrègue had not been able to extend the RPF's appeal to a wider section of the population. In particular, there is no evidence in Baumel's

²⁵ M. Debré, 'Incohérence africaine', in *La République et ses problèmes* (Paris: Nagel, 1952), pp. 118-20

²⁶ RPF archives, Maroc, Dossier 51.1, J. Baumel, *Situation du RPF au Maroc*, 1951-2

detailed report of any Muslim involvement in Gaullist activities. Even though Baumel concluded that Valabrègue was to be replaced because of the federation's failure to spread Gaullism more widely, his list of eight possible replacements was drawn entirely from the French business community, with no Muslims or working-class settlers.²⁷

Despite the lack of encouraging signs from Morocco, Foccart, in Paris, sought to promote the idea that overseas support for Gaullism could inspire a similar phenomenon in France. In November 1953 Foccart proposed a certain M. Torre – the RPF's representative in Morocco – as candidate for a vacant seat in the *Assemblée de l'Union Française*, a post often seen as a sinecure offered to loyal metropolitan politicians (indeed, Foccart had already benefited from such an arrangement himself).²⁸ Foccart was initially determined that Torre should be elected, as a symbol of the importance of Morocco within both Gaullism and the *Union française*, and of Gaullist commitment to including the settler population in the political life of France: 'il y aurait un intérêt évident à ce que le Maroc soit représenté à l'Union française par un vieux Français du Maroc'.²⁹ However, by the time of selection in March 1954, internal RPF affairs had reasserted themselves and Foccart's initiative was sidelined. Olivier Guichard, de Gaulle's *chef de cabinet*, required paid employment in order to remain in the General's service. Instead of Torre, Guichard was to be the RPF's choice for the vacant seat, and the chance to make a gesture that would demonstrate the Gaullists' commitment to allowing their members in the colonies to participate in policy debates was lost. The whole episode was indicative of the way in which North Africa mattered to the Gaullists as an aspect of international and defence policy, and as an electoral and parliamentary weapon against other parties or the government, but ultimately remained the subject of policy determined in Paris rather than an area in

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ Foccart was elected to the *Assemblée de l'Union Française* in March with the aid of de Gaulle. P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle: entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard* (Paris: Fayard/Jeune Afrique, 1995), p. 88

²⁹ RPF archives, Maroc, Dossier 51.4, Foccart to Torre, 19.11.1953

which the leadership deferred to the views of its local activists. Torre's response to the RPF leadership's decision revealed much about the relationship between Paris and the Gaullist organisation in the areas that appeared to hold a special place in RPF priorities:

Il y a un énorme travail à faire de liaison et d'information entre la France et le Maroc ... j'aspirais à jouer un rôle suivant les directives que nous aurions arrêtées à Paris; les contacts accidentels ou sporadiques ne sont pas suffisants maintenant, il faut une action ordonnée et suivie par un même individu pour suivre très attentivement le problème franco-marocain ... Dans ce pays les grands problèmes qui font l'objet de l'activité du RPF en France, échappent un peu à nos compagnons du Maroc et la seule chose qui les intéresse pour l'instant c'est leur avenir dans ce pays ... Concernant le RPF au Maroc, je dois préciser que les Français ici s'intéressent au Rassemblement à cause de leur dévouement au Général, et ensuite dans un but électoral. Le Général a déçu en remettant à différentes reprises sa visite au Maroc; il est difficile d'expliquer à des gens simples les raisons importantes de ces décisions, puisqu'ici, un seul problème existe, celui des intérêts des Français au Maroc.³⁰

The importance of North Africa to overall Gaullist policy clearly outweighed the RPF's practical commitment to its organisation in the protectorates, and the danger of the Gaullists losing the support of or influence over the settlers in Morocco was increasing by 1954 as the RPF in France began to disintegrate.

Gaullist policy on the future of Morocco, too, was frequently subject to considerations of domestic politics and electoral advantage, and affected by the RPF's divisions. In general, details of policy initiatives seem to have been of secondary importance behind the issue of establishing a strong Gaullist presence in the region. The case of Georges Catroux demonstrates how the RPF made little

³⁰ *ibid*, Torre to Foccart, 14.3.1954

attempt to instigate debate about the movement's position on reform in Morocco, leaving individual members to make their own statements of policy. Catroux's call for a revision of the Treaty of Protectorate to correspond more closely to the changing situation, in November 1950, for example, did not receive the widespread publicity in the Gaullist press that one might expect of a seemingly radical new departure in policy. In 1952 Catroux again diverged from what might be expected of the RPF, going against the dominant trend of support for the colonial administration by denouncing the way in which French policy in Morocco in the 1930s had failed to remain true to the ideals of Marshal Lyautey. Once again, Catroux's views were largely unreported in Gaullist circles.³¹ Through his involvement in the liberal *Comité France Maghreb*, Catroux found himself on the opposing side to that favoured by most Gaullists. This committee of intellectuals and politicians was founded in 1953, chaired by François Mauriac, and included such illustrious figures of the anticolonial and left-wing movement as the historian Charles-André Julien, Albert Camus, and future President of Senegal, Léopold Sedar Senghor. While not an overtly pro-independence organisation – it called for respect for human rights, an end to violence and repression, and 'une cohabitation confiante entre tous les habitants de l'Afrique du Nord' – it is nonetheless somewhat surprising to find a prominent Gaullist in such company at a period when the RPF was committed to the defence of French interests in Morocco. Catroux also chaired a parallel group, the *Comité d'étude des problèmes d'Outre-Mer*, in which he was joined by his fellow Gaullist Diomède Catroux, as well as former Tunisian Residents-General Périllier and Rous.³² This organisation cannot be said to be anticolonialist, but it did nevertheless display a willingness to debate original solutions to the Moroccan crisis that was not found in mainstream Gaullist circles. These distinctive positions adopted by Georges Catroux, however, appear very much as the exception to a general rule of consensus

³¹ G. Oved, 'Le débat politique sur le Maroc de 1945 à 1955', *Relations Internationales*, 37 (1984), p. 77

³² Hervé Bleuchot, *Les libéraux français au Maroc (1947-1955)* (Gap: Editions de l'Université de Provence, 1972), p. 238

among leading Gaullists.³³ In 1954, certainly, debate did finally arise within the Gaullist movement over Fouchet's appointment to the Ministry of Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs, although it could be argued that even this debate had more to do with the Gaullist principle of non-participation in Fourth Republic governments than with the Moroccan and Tunisian questions themselves.

Gaullism and Tunisia, 1951-54

As in Morocco, the Gaullists' concerns about Tunisia were related to international interests and the growth of nationalism, both of which were seen in the context of French government weakness. Unlike in Morocco, however, the Gaullists could call upon a well organised and effective Tunisian RPF movement, which increased their ability to influence government policy on the future of the protectorate. Since the creation in 1945 of the *Rassemblement Français Démocratique et Social* (RFDS) to represent the settlers, who elected a senator but no National Assembly deputies, there had been pressure for a close association between the RFDS and the RPF. Upon the creation of the RPF, Yvan Colonna, a Gaullist and one of the French community in Tunisia's most vocal spokesmen, had pressed for the RFDS to effectively become the Tunisian RPF, much to the discontent of Gaullist leaders in Paris, who were keen to preserve the movement's independence and concerned that such an overt association with the settlers would damage the RPF's chances of attracting MRP and Socialist voters.³⁴ The nomination of the mayor of Tunis, Perussel, rather than Colonna, as RPF *délégué général* in Tunisia, and the RPF's ability to attract more members than the RFDS in the immediate post-war years, led to a split between the two movements. The competition between them, however, meant that they needed to

³³ Although Catroux was excluded from the inner circle of RPF leadership, his status as one of the movement's elder statesmen did not suffer greatly from his dissidence over North African questions. His close personal association with de Gaulle was surely an important reason for this.

³⁴ C. Paillat, *Vingt ans qui déchirèrent la France, vol. 1: le guêpier* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1969), pp. 512-15. It is revealing that the RPF were more concerned about the effect of a strong settler vote on their appeal to the left and centre in France, than with its effect on their chances of attracting support among the Tunisians. The North African Muslim populations, despite the legacy of de Gaulle's wartime reforms, were rarely seen as a credible source of Gaullist support in the early years of the Fourth Republic.

attract support among the same relatively small settler population, with the Muslims who could vote remaining steadfastly indifferent to the RPF. Thus, by the early 1950s, the success of the RPF in Tunisia depended on its ability to appeal to a fundamentally conservative population. Its chief asset was Gabriel Puaux, Senator representing the *Français de Tunisie*, who became one of the most vocal campaigners against reform. His views were influential on RPF policy on Tunisia.³⁵

Puaux came to dominate the RPF in Tunisia, until he was to all intents and purposes the movement's only public face in the protectorate. Indeed, his influence extended beyond that normally enjoyed by the RPF in that, as a representative of the settler population and in conjunction with the conservative civil service, he actually succeeded in influencing government policy in Tunisia, thereby giving the RPF a voice that they would have struggled to achieve through conventional metropolitan politics. Puaux put pressure on the government to uphold what he referred to as the 'rights of France' in Tunisia, and those of the *Français de Tunisie*,³⁶ resulting in the government's famous letter of 15 December 1951, in which, largely in response to pressure from the settler community, Foreign Minister Schuman reversed the government's commitment to independence announced at Thionville in 1950.³⁷ According to the anticolonialist historian Charles-André Julien, the priority thus given to defence of French interests - the 'politique de la note du 15 décembre' - was at the origin of the Franco-Tunisian dispute from that date until Mendès-France announced internal autonomy in July 1954.³⁸ Indeed, the nationalist leader, Bourguiba, saw the French government's willingness to respond to this pressure from

³⁵ Puaux had been appointed Resident-General in Morocco by de Gaulle in 1943, and had served until 1946.

³⁶ C.A. Julien, *Et la Tunisie devint indépendante (1951-1957)* (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1985), p. 30

³⁷ The change in government policy and apparent concession to the settlers was a decisive moment in the campaign for Tunisian independence. In the short term, it removed any doubts the nationalists had about appealing to the UN, while in the longer term it can be seen as a crucial stage in the development of a more militant stance on the part of the *Néo-Destour* (Tunisian independence party) and a blow to nationalist hopes of continued cooperation with the French government. S. El Machat, *Tunisie: Les chemins vers l'indépendance (1945-1956)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), pp. 141-2

³⁸ Julien, p. 31

the settlers as a sign that France was not prepared to seriously address the question of independence.³⁹

Puaux's influence extended beyond his role as a constant voice of opposition; he also managed to secure the appointment of the conservative Gaullist Jean de Hautecloque (cousin of Marshal Leclerc and consequently a figure of some status in the Gaullist pantheon) as Resident-General, a move that aggravated Franco-Tunisian tensions. Puaux was able to exert such influence through his son's position in the Foreign Ministry's *Sous-direction des Protectorats*. Puaux junior had pressured Foreign Minister Schuman into appointing Hautecloque, and President Vincent Auriol despaired of the latter's conservatism and apparent desire to prolong and aggravate the Franco-Tunisian tensions.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Hautecloque was seen as incompetent, imprisoning the Tunisian Prime Minister, Chenik, without government approval in 1951, maintaining overt contact with the *ultras* among the settler population and refusing to protect Tunisian targets against French violence. Hautecloque's reactionary behaviour in Tunisia was condemned not only by Auriol, but also by moderate Gaullists such as General Catroux, but it appears, nevertheless, that the majority of the RPF was content to have secured the appointment of one of its members to a key position. The metropolitan RPF publication, Terrenoire's *Courrier d'Information Politique*, echoed this initial approval of Hautecloque, hoping that he would overcome government *immobilisme* and be able to win over the Muslims.⁴¹ Such indulgence towards the new Resident-General, however, was short-lived, due to the fact that most Gaullist attacks on official policy towards Tunisia made no distinction between Gaullists serving the regime and others. As repression and tension worsened in Tunisia in 1952, the Gaullists' confidence in Hautecloque

³⁹ Julien comments on the policy thus forced upon the government by the voice of the Tunisian Gaullists: 'On trouverait difficilement dans l'histoire coloniale une si lourde faute et une telle persistance dans l'erreur.' Julien, p. 31

⁴⁰ Auriol suspected that the RPF's support in 1952 for the investiture of the Pinay government owed much to the appointment of Hautecloque in Tunisia. V. Auriol, *Journal du Septennat*, vol. 6 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1970-78), pp. 243-4, 256

⁴¹ *Courrier d'Information politique*, 1 (April 1952)

diminished. The Gaullists, therefore, firmly established themselves, in 1951 and 1952, as the voice of the settlers in Tunisia. They demonstrated their ability to use the French government's fear of causing offence to the settlers as a means of exerting influence in governmental circles, even, as Auriol indicates, beginning to develop a strategy of making North African policy a condition of their support for governments. This tactic was displayed on several occasions before 1958, notably in the cases of the Mollet and Bourgès-Manoury administrations of 1956-7. While the very idea of RPF support for government went against Gaullist orthodoxy, it nevertheless demonstrates the evolution both of the metropolitan RPF and of the prominence enjoyed by North Africa in Gaullist thinking.

As in the case of Morocco, the actual policy of the metropolitan RPF towards Tunisia was expressed infrequently and with only a limited degree of coherence. In 1950, Debré had published an article in which he claimed that the settlers were not being excessive in their demands for stability, and the situation was one which could easily be solved because of the general popularity of the French *oeuvre* in the protectorate; all that had to be done was to demonstrate more clearly to the population the benefits that French rule had brought.⁴² By early 1951, however, Debré had concluded that, contrary to the French reluctance to make small concessions in Morocco, in Tunisia, 'On cède tout à nos ennemis...il faudra après d'inutiles abandons, reprendre l'autorité'.⁴³

Debré frequently criticised the French administration in Tunisia, considering it overbearing and lacking in the qualities shown by earlier examples of colonial rule: 'la fermeté, la dignité et...l'honnêteté...Ces erreurs ont facilité et justifié la transformation du nationalisme en un mouvement révolutionnaire'.⁴⁴ While one may assume that Debré's assertion that the nationalists had a legitimate cause for

⁴² Debré, 'Tunisie 1950', in *La République et ses problèmes*, pp. 113-4

⁴³ Debré, 'Incohérence africaine', pp. 118-9.

⁴⁴ Debré, 'La France Musulmane', in *La République et ses problèmes*, pp. 123-4

complaint was a mere rhetorical device, it is nevertheless significant that the Gaullists' assault on the regime was clearly accorded such importance that the nationalists, too, were not to be condemned entirely for simply taking advantage of the government's weakness. Jacques Soustelle added that the government's weakness in allowing Bourguiba to return to Tunisia from his detention in France was directly responsible for the troubles, and insisted that the government should give assurances that its policy was to remain in line with that of December 1951.⁴⁵ The implication – which was to become a key point of RPF colonial policy in the Fourth Republic – was that a restoration of purpose, dignity and authority to French government would eradicate the nationalist challenge.

In this context, the RPF's support for the settlers might be interpreted as much as an advocacy of organisation and direct action in the face of an incompetent administration, as the adoption of a definite policy of hostility to the nationalists; concessions might be possible, as in Morocco, provided that they could be granted from a position of strength and stability. The Gaullists felt that the Muslims could still be won over to the benefits of continued association with France, stressing that France's role in Tunisia should extend beyond a mere defence of its own interests to encompass the true development of the French colonial mission.⁴⁶ In contrast to the benefits of French influence, Fouchet described the nationalist *Néo-Destour* party as 'un mouvement calqué sur les mouvements fasciste et hitlérien'.⁴⁷ Both these ideas – that the Muslims could be rallied to the French cause if the colonial mission were finally properly implemented on a sufficiently large scale, and that North African nationalists were the heirs of the European dictators of the 1930s and 40s – featured prominently in Gaullist discourse on Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria later in the

⁴⁵ Soustelle, *AN*, 22.1.1952, *JORF*

⁴⁶ Fouchet, *AN*, 1.4.1952, *JORF*; RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, Motion on Tunisia, 9-11.11.1951

⁴⁷ Fouchet, *AN*, 1.4.1952, *JORF*

Fourth Republic. They can be seen as a result of the Gaullists' discovery of the polarisation of the two communities in Tunisia in the early 1950s.

While the Gaullists were principally concerned with the re-establishment of order in Tunisia and Morocco, they also became aware of the effect of the problems in the protectorates both in Algeria and among North African immigrants in France. The phrase 'La situation en Afrique du Nord' was used for the first time by the *Lettre à l'Union Française* in March 1952, where previous reports had always spoken exclusively of problems in Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria alone.⁴⁸ The potential links between nationalism in the protectorates and in Algeria were highlighted in April of the same year, with speculation that the veteran Algerian nationalist leader Messali Hadj was in contact with the Tunisian *Néo-Destour* party.⁴⁹ Once Algerian nationalism was identified as a potential consequence of the problems in the protectorates, the Gaullists began to see a threat to stability in Algeria in a number of forms. One of these was the problem of Algerian immigration to France, a phenomenon that had not captured Gaullist attention before the escalation of problems in Morocco and Tunisia. In 1952, following violence between police and Algerian immigrants in Northern France, it was reported that Algerian workers had now become targets for the forces of subversion – hardly an original observation given the history of Algerian nationalist recruitment in the impoverished 18th and 19th *arrondissements* of Paris in the 1920s – and that those demonstrating against poor conditions now also carried anticolonialist and pro-nationalist banners.⁵⁰ Foccart called for urgent measures, including a reassessment of immigration policy, to halt the spread of Algerian nationalism: 'La libre circulation entre l'Algérie et la France doit d'urgence être suspendue. Des opérations d'envergure doivent être

⁴⁸ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 125 (13.3.1952)

⁴⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 132 (30.4.1952). This example of Gaullist perceptions of North African nationalism also reveals the extent to which the RPF was relatively uninformed of the scale of the problem, as contacts between the various nationalist movements had been going on since the Second World War.

⁵⁰ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 133 (8.5.1952)

entreprises dans toutes les régions où vit une population nord-africaine agglomérée'.⁵¹ In parliament, Raymond Dronne pointed out 'l'ampleur et l'urgence du problème social et politique constitué par la présence de très nombreux Nord-Africains en France'.⁵² For Fouchet, however, this problem, like the unrest in the protectorates and Algeria, was of French making: France had failed to provide a sufficiently welcoming environment for North African students and workers, with the result that: 'nous en faisons souvent des faux intellectuels et des prolétaires, c'est-à-dire tout ce qu'il faut pour les donner corps et âme aux doctrines totalitaires et au communisme'.⁵³

By 1954, most of the factors that were to dominate Gaullist policy on North Africa until 1958 were in place: resistance to internationalisation, refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the principle of self-determination, attacks on government for both *immobilisme* and inconsistency, warnings of the international and domestic consequences of losing North Africa, and reminders of the continuing importance of the French civilising mission. In 1954, the loss of Indochina, the definitive adoption of a liberal official position on the protectorates, and the outbreak of war in Algeria provided an environment in which the Gaullists' evolving ideas were applied to the escalating problems in North Africa.

⁵¹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 136 (29.5.1952)

⁵² Dronne, *AN*, 16.7.1953, *JORF*

⁵³ Fouchet, *AN*, 5.6.1952, *JORF*

CHAPTER 4

THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE COMMUNITY AND FRENCH NORTH AFRICA

Europe, Africa and Western Security: Changing Gaullist Priorities

Between 1952 and 1954, the debate over the proposed common European defence force, the European Defence Community (EDC), dominated and polarised French political life. Conceived as a means of allowing the West German rearmament that seemed essential in the context of the Cold War balance of forces in Europe, while preventing the rebirth of a powerful German army, it nevertheless attracted strong criticism from both Gaullists and Communists. The RPF claimed that parliament's acceptance of the EDC would amount to the loss of France's independent military capacity, and consequently of national independence. The campaign against the EDC also held great significance in the internal life of the RPF, as it provided the focus that maintained Gaullist cohesion in the year following de Gaulle's withdrawal from active politics in May 1953. It allowed the Gaullists to develop contacts with members of other parties and with military and non-political figures,¹ in a prelude to the cross-party campaigns of the later years of the Fourth Republic in favour of *Algérie française*. The anti-EDC campaign is, therefore, a crucial area in the study of Fourth Republic Gaullism in that it shaped both policy and tactics for the years to come.

The National Assembly's rejection of the EDC treaty in 1954 – due partly if not entirely to the fierce attacks led by Gaullists – demonstrated that there was indeed a 'Gaullist alternative' in parliament; in the words of one Gaullist, the rejection of the treaty showed that 'nous ne sommes donc pas morts, puisque nous pouvons encore

¹ Jean Charlot has demonstrated the importance of the EDC campaign in determining the pattern of Gaullist relations with the Fourth Republic 'system'. Notable examples of the way in which Gaullist behaviour was influenced by the EDC debate are the RPF's promise of support for the investiture of Georges Bidault (MRP) or René Mayer (Radical) as Prime Minister if either would pledge to oppose EDC. Furthermore, René Capitant, the RPF's strongest voice of opposition to the Fourth Republic regime, considered, during the EDC campaign, the possibility that rather than continuing its policy of uncompromising opposition, the RPF might enter into the 'system' with the intention of taking advantage of a divisive issue to undermine it from within. This alternative conception of Gaullist opposition to the Fourth Republic, devised in response to EDC, remained influential in Gaullist debates until 1958. J. Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'opposition* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 282-4.

détruire'.² The success that Gaullist leaders saw in the defeat of the EDC encouraged them to adopt an increasingly hostile position towards the Fourth Republic, which they now believed could be defeated just as one of its central policies had been. The EDC campaign gave the Gaullists an opportunity to state clearly that North Africa, and the *Union française* in general, were too important to sacrifice to European integration. Seeking support for this view, and often finding it in military circles, the Gaullists came to commit themselves to a worldview that called for the retention of an unbreakable link between metropolitan France and its most valued overseas territories. Consequently, the EDC affair shaped Gaullist policy for the years to come, in that it led to the development of the idea that the most pressing threat to French security was not Soviet military aggression, but anticolonialism. From the EDC campaign until 1958, the Gaullists argued that the way to save France from insecurity and weakness was not through the new concept of European integration, but rather through stronger bonds between the metropole and North Africa, thus guaranteeing both security from military attack and a restored sense of purpose and status.

While seemingly not directly related to colonial questions, the EDC debate played a role in developing Gaullist views on the *Union française*, and North Africa in particular. It represented, for the Gaullists, a clear symbol of the choice that the nation faced, between a limited European role, which would in time be eclipsed by Germany, and a more ambitious, rewarding and constructive world role based on concentrating energy and resources on the Empire. Consequently, the EDC debate deserves to be examined in terms of its importance in focusing Gaullist policy on the emerging questions of the *Union française*.³

² Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'opposition*, p. 296. This often-quoted remark was made by the RPF deputy, André Diethelm, on the occasion of the defeat of the Mayer government at the heart of the EDC affair, on May 21, 1953, by the combined votes of Gaullists, Communists and Socialists. The implication was that it was the Gaullists' decision to vote with their political opponents on a matter they considered to be of sufficient importance that had produced the decisive result. Coming at a time of Gaullist division, five days before de Gaulle brought the parliamentary RPF to an end, this vote held great significance for Gaullists as it offered hope that they could continue to exert influence on questions of national importance.

³ In addition to the present focus on the colonial aspect of the Gaullists' reactions to the EDC, the affair's significance for Gaullism has been analysed from a number of different perspectives. Charlot concentrates on the internal life of the RPF and its relations with the 'system'; Odile Rudelle

Most studies of the EDC's failure have concentrated on France's political instability, fear of German rearmament and relations with the United States over questions of Western security.⁴ While the principal reasons for the treaty's rejection were indeed closely related to the evolving Franco-American relationship and the government's failure to allay fears about German rearmament, extra-European affairs did play a part in the development of opposition to the EDC proposal. As Aimaq has shown,⁵ the subject benefits from being seen in the context of the growing importance of colonial problems in French decision making. Aimaq focuses, therefore, on the influence of events in Indochina on French government policy, demonstrating that Franco-American differences over the Asian colonies gave rise to an increased perception of American threat to French interests.⁶ A similar approach, explaining opposition to EDC at least partly by colonial questions, might be considered relevant to a study of the Gaullist opposition to the treaty. This chapter will therefore take as its starting point the Gaullists' growing interest in North Africa and their conviction that the problems in the Protectorates and Algeria were of importance to the Western world as a whole. This approach led the Gaullists to address questions of whether the focus on Europe that the EDC proposal demanded would offer sufficient benefits to justify a corresponding reduction of interest in and military commitment to North Africa. As the proposed EDC treaty would not extend to European countries' overseas territories – just as the NATO treaty covered Algeria but not Morocco or Tunisia – it

emphasises the role that the EDC campaign played in establishing Michel Debré as the intellectual leader of the Gaullists and a spokesman for the concept of the Nation above all else; Debré devoted a substantial proportion of his memoirs to the importance of the EDC episode in laying foundations for the future course of Fourth Republic Gaullism, by establishing networks that were useful in 1958 and committing Gaullists to international and nuclear roles for France. Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'opposition*; O. Rudelle, 'Michel Debré et la CED', in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle et le RPF (1947-1955)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1998), pp. 556-62; M. Debré, *Trois Républiques pour une France: mémoires, vol. 2: Agir, 1946-1958* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988), pp. 161-256.

⁴ For the history and significance of the EDC episode, see E. Fursdon, *The European Defence Community, a History* (London: Macmillan, 1980); Jacques Fauvet et al., *La querelle de la C.E.D. : essais d'analyse sociologique* (Paris: A. Colin, 1956)

⁵ J. Aimaq, *For Europe or Empire: French colonial ambitions and the European army plan* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1996)

⁶ France saw the apparent American lack of commitment to its effort in Indochina as a symbol of the United States' equivocal attitude to the role of the *Union française* as part of a western security system.

raised the issue of a choice that would have to be made between Europe and the *Union française*.

Before dealing with the Gaullists' arguments regarding the EDC and the colonies, it is important to place the question of European defence and co-operation in the broader context of French foreign and defence policy. Since the early years of the Fourth Republic, the idea had been gaining ground, in particular in military circles, that France's interests might lie not in a total commitment to Europe, but rather in some sort of role as a link between Europe and Africa. The idea of *puissance* or *grandeur* as an essential element of the French state, as outlined in chapter 1, was not, in the early Fourth Republic, exclusively the preserve of the Gaullists, despite its close association with de Gaulle, which is surely a legacy of the General's Fifth Republic policies.⁷ The alternative to a close association with Europe, in the early years of the Fourth Republic, was generally referred to as Eurafrica, a term that had originally been used in the 1930s. The concept of Eurafrica implied a Franco-African community as a world power, in which the development of an African hinterland would ensure that France would never be restricted by lack of space, population or resources, and would consequently be able to stand comparison with the other major players in international politics. By the post-war period, this had taken on the implied meaning of matching the domestic stability, prosperity and confident outlook of the superpowers. Gaullists were quick to adopt the model of Eurafrica and apply it to their views of an evolving relationship between the metropole and the Empire, particularly with reference to closer integration with Algeria. The first to use the term in this sense after the Second World War, however, were the military planners at the *Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Défense Nationale* (IHEDN).⁸ This is an early

⁷ On the themes of *puissance* and *grandeur* in both Gaullist and official policy at the beginning of the Fourth Republic, see J-P. Brunet, 'Le RPF et l'idée de puissance nationale (1945-1948)', in *La Puissance française en question (1945-1949)*, ed. by R. Girault & R. Frank (Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), pp. 362-84; M. Vaïsse, *La grandeur: politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle 1958-1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), pp. 22-52

⁸ C. d'Abzac-Epezy & P. Vial, 'In Search of a European Consciousness: French Military Elites and the Idea of Europe, 1947-1954', in *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948-1963*, ed. by A. Deighton (Oxford: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 12

example of the transfer of ideas from the military to the Gaullist movement, a process considerably facilitated by the close contacts between *militaires* and Gaullism from the time of the RPF until 1958, and one which can be seen in several cases of Gaullist foreign and colonial policy development during the Fourth Republic.

Eurafrica came to be opposed to the EDC proposal, with its supporters in the military claiming that it offered a larger geographical field in which France could operate in defence of national security.⁹ For advocates of Eurafrika, the permanence of the *Union française* was not in question. Based on the assumption that the threat of actual dissolution of the Empire in Africa was small, the Eurafrika lobby focused on the EDC proposal as the chief threat to their vision of a new global role for France, and it was their attachment to an African vocation in foreign and defence policy that lay behind much of their strategic opposition to EDC. This view of the EDC affair does not seek to demonstrate that fear of German revival was not of great importance to the treaty's enemies, but it can be argued that the opposition based on consideration of strategic questions differed from the anti-German element of the anti-EDC campaign, which tended to focus on the more emotive issue of French leadership in Europe. Such claims to European leadership, however, fulfilled a function of national prestige and inspiration as much as they responded to the pressing strategic questions of the time.

The military objection to EDC, which closely mirrored the Gaullists' views, was that the only possible way in which to conceive of European organisation was in the form of a united Eurafrika under French leadership. The union that would be achieved through EDC was dismissed as nothing more than a 'small Europe' that would lack the resources and status to assume a world role to rival the superpowers.¹⁰ Gaullist

⁹ That this geographical field consisted of the African colonies does not appear to have made Eurafrika the exclusive domain of the strongest opponents of colonial reforms. Colonialism was not a prominent aspect of the discourse surrounding the idea of the Empire in Africa as a necessary hinterland for the metropole; the debate about the strategic value of Eurafrika always remained separate from any discussion about the need or otherwise for reform in the *Union française*.

¹⁰ C. d'Abzac-Epezy & P. Vial, 'In Search of a European Consciousness', p. 12

concerns with finding a path between Washington and Moscow clearly persisted into the early 1950s, a legacy of de Gaulle's attempt to maintain dialogue with the Soviet Union as Head of the Provisional Government. Thus the concern for French prestige evident in military and Gaullist thinking combined with the Gaullists' interest in an equivocal attitude to the superpowers, resulting in an opposition to EDC which emphasised the idea that European union would lessen France's ability to retain sufficient influence and authority in both European and world affairs.¹¹

The threat to French influence in North Africa seemed more serious to the Gaullists once the prospect of a German renaissance was evoked in the early 1950s. Whereas in the immediate post-war period, French participation in a form of European union was not viewed wholly negatively, because of the assumption that any such body would not include Germany, by 1951 it had become clear that any future European organisation would inevitably include West Germany, and indeed be designed to ensure its successful reconstruction. Debré, who had devoted much energy to various proposals for European co-operation in the late 1940s, lost enthusiasm for Europe at around the same time that the Gaullists began to identify a threat to French North Africa. That the escalation of problems in the Protectorates and Algeria coincided with the realisation that German revival was to be encouraged by France's Western Alliance partners served to highlight the links between French aspirations to leadership in Europe and the nation's parallel role in the *Union française*. The catalyst for a change in Gaullist attitudes to Europe was the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950, which was clearly a response to American pressure and intended to allow German industrial recovery. From this point on, the idea of the

¹¹ While the most pressing international affair for France in 1951-54 might be said to have been the war in Indochina, the Gaullists did not see Indochina as creating a worrying precedent for the rest of the Empire until the fall of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. French losses in the years before that point tended to be explained by Gaullists as the result of government incompetence, lack of support for the armed forces, and American refusals to provide more aid, rather than being seen as part of a global movement that seriously threatened France's world role. Franco-American differences over Indochina did, however, make a significant contribution to French perceptions of American security policy as a potential threat. The Gaullist reactions to the war in Indochina will be dealt with in the following chapter; on Gaullist interpretations of the conflict before 1954, see F. Turpin, 'Le RPF et la Guerre d'Indochine (1947-1954)', in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle et le RPF*, pp. 530-40

Union française as a necessary counterweight to a German-dominated Europe gathered support among Gaullists.

In December 1951 Debré outlined the problem posed by the new situation in Europe:

La construction que nous envisageons, nous ne sommes plus les maîtres de l'édifier. Désormais, sur le continent, nous sommes deux de jeu, et si les institutions dites spécialisées voient le jour – autorité du charbon et de l'acier, état-major européen – nous nous apercevrons... que nous sommes très loin de la liberté d'action que nous avions voici seulement deux ans. Déjà les desseins de la nouvelle Allemagne sont claires: elle n'accepte l'idée d'Europe que dans la mesure où cette Europe lui permettra un jour de reconquérir son unité et sa puissance... C'est à dire que la France doit refaire sa force et sa volonté. Problème intérieur, sans doute... Mais aussi problème plus vaste, celui de l'Union française. Plus que jamais nous nous rendons compte que la France continentale n'est pas grand chose à elle seule. Quelle gratitude ne devons-nous pas à ces bâtisseurs d'empire, notamment à nos grands Africains qui, par leur oeuvre continue depuis cent vingt ans, donnent à la France épuisée du XX^e siècle des chances nouvelles.¹²

With the evolution of the post-war plans for European co-operation into a narrower – specifically economic and military – form of Western European integration, the appeal of Europe had faded for the Gaullists. Europe no longer held sufficient appeal or hope for the revival of a France exhausted by war and division and in need of a new role. This new role, according to Debré and most of his fellow Gaullists, was to be found in Africa.

The Gaullists' first steps towards opposing a Eurafrikan vision to a purely European one did not represent merely a retreat into the certainties of colonialism. They represented the beginnings of an attempt to define a new role for France in the world, one that would build on a position of strength and leadership not in Europe but in the Empire. Coupled with the Gaullists' short-term concerns about re-establishing authority in North Africa, from 1951-2 one can identify a new sense of purpose in the Gaullist attachment to the region, which grew in intensity as the two-year debate over

¹² Debré, 'France, Europe et Union Française' (14.12.1951), in M. Debré, *La République et ses problèmes*, (Paris: Nagel, 1952), pp. 125-6

the EDC reinforced the need to develop an alternative policy to the pro-European orthodoxy of the majority of the governing coalition. Opposition to EDC thus provided the Gaullists with an opportunity to propose an alternative vision of France's future *grandeur*, based on Africa rather than Europe, a valuable chance to reintegrate national political debate after the 1951 elections, and an unmissable opportunity to demonstrate Gaullism's enduring relevance and popularity by associating themselves with a cause that seemed popular - opposition to German rearmament. The demise of the parliamentary RPF during the anti-EDC campaign provided an additional impetus to the Gaullist campaign, as the Gaullists' very existence as a coherent movement in 1953-4 might be said to have depended upon their success in the EDC debate alone.

EDC and the Gaullist Alternative

The chief tenet of the Gaullists' arguments against EDC was that France would become too small a nation if restricted to a purely European role, losing the prestige and world status that its imperial mission had given it. In addition to the geopolitical lessons of the Second World War experience, Michel Debré stressed that France's role must continue to extend beyond Europe into North Africa for the simple reason that 'la France est une puissance musulmane'.¹³ The idea that France must remain a power in the Muslim world as well as in Europe, while apparently inspired by the colonial *mission civilisatrice*, might also be seen as a consequence of pressure being exerted on metropolitan politics by those with an interest in protecting Algeria. Marcel-Edmond Naegelen, for example, while Governor-General in Algeria between 1948 and 1951, developed the argument that Algeria was essential to France in order to obtain greater financial commitment from the metropole through fear of what the consequences would be for France in the event of the loss of North Africa.¹⁴ Indeed, Charles-Robert Ageron has demonstrated that such warnings of the unthinkable consequences of the end of France's role in North Africa predate the unrest in the

¹³ Debré, *CR*, 20.12.1951, *JORF*. This argument was also used to emphasise the extent to which France was different from the United States in its world role, and consequently as a justification for rejection of American plans that would alter French foreign policy objectives.

¹⁴ C-R Ageron, "'L'Algérie dernière chance de la puissance française": Etude d'un mythe politique (1954-1962)', *Relations Internationales*, 57 (1989), pp. 113-39

Protectorates and Algeria by several years, dating back to 1946-7.¹⁵ In the immediate post-war years, the effect of such arguments was most noticeable on the Left, with even those in favour of recognising the *fait national algérien* nevertheless stressing the absolute need for France to retain a presence beyond Europe.¹⁶ The most commonly proposed solution to this dilemma was some kind of federation, an idea that was to be further discussed by the Gaullists in later years (see pp. 168, 208-9).

In 1951, Michel Debré defined France's dual and closely linked areas of concern as Western Europe and the Mediterranean:

La France... a deux zones majeures d'intérêts: d'une part, l'Europe continentale; d'autre part, la Méditerranée et l'Afrique du Nord. Elle y a son intérêt propre, car ce sont ses deux frontières, deux bastions de sa sécurité, mais elle a aussi la défense d'un intérêt commun à l'ensemble de l'Occident. En Europe, elle est la liberté, face aux incertitudes et aux tendances tyranniques; en Méditerranée et en Afrique du Nord, elle est, par expérience, par tradition, l'autorité et la paix vis-à-vis des ferments d'anarchie ou de division.¹⁷

For Debré, France's interest in the Mediterranean derived from the same concern for security and stability that was at stake in Europe. In this context, the Gaullists could not accept a plan designed to secure European defence that did not acknowledge either the importance of North Africa to that defence or the unique commitment of France to the communal security effort through its presence in the Mediterranean region. At present, Debré claimed, France was already prevented from exercising full control in the Mediterranean region, as none of the relevant Allied commands was held by a French military figure.¹⁸ Further military integration with the rest of Western Europe would therefore only lead to similar dilutions of French authority in North Africa.

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ *ibid*, p. 120

¹⁷ Debré, *CR*, 20.12.1951, *JORF*

¹⁸ In 1951, the Allied Supreme Command in the Mediterranean was American, the Naval Command British, and the Land Command for North Africa Italian.

At the time of the EDC debate, however, the Gaullists' immediate priority was not to develop a new relationship between France and North Africa, but instead to combat any attempt to prioritise Europe over other areas of national interest. The 1952 RPF *Assises* saw the RPF strongly affirm its belief that France should not be reduced to a uniquely European role. The most strident advocate of this view was, unsurprisingly, Michel Debré, who asserted that:

La France n'est pas seulement européenne. La puissance française tient à l'Afrique et à l'ensemble des peuples des territoires d'Outre-Mer... Ce n'est pas seulement une question de puissance, c'est une question de sécurité et même d'existence. Il n'est pas d'avenir garanti pour les Français s'ils n'exercent pas un rôle déterminant en Méditerranée et dans l'Atlantique.¹⁹

While Debré failed to explain in what way the very existence of France would be in doubt if it were to be deprived of its non-European role – presumably a reference to the threat of communist take-over and civil war in the event of the loss of the *Union française* – he emphasised strongly that the nation's priority should be not Europe, but France's overseas interests.

Debré's remarks were echoed by the RPF deputy for Guyana, Edouard Gaumont. Speaking as a citizen of the *Outre-Mer*, Gaumont attacked the 'eurocentrism' of government policy. Gaumont emphasised the importance of the *Union française* to metropolitan France in terms of its potential contribution to national defence and economic growth – both of which were subjects that now demanded consideration on a global scale – and he rejected any separation of 'European' and 'colonial' affairs. For Gaumont and other Gaullists *d'Outre-Mer*, the lesson of these observations was that: 'Les traités, pactes ou accords ne doivent en aucun cas être conclus autrement qu'au nom de l'Union française tout entière, et en fonction de ses intérêts et de sa défense, qui sont et demeurent indivisibles'.²⁰ Both Debré and Gaumont relied heavily on traditional notions of Jacobin republicanism – a theme found throughout the

¹⁹ Debré, 'L'Europe', RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, 9-11.1.1952

²⁰ E. Gaumont, 'L'Union française et la politique extérieure de la France', RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, 9-11.11.1952

nineteenth and twentieth centuries – with emphasis on the absolute indivisibility of the Republic. In later years, Soustelle also drew upon this enduring aspect of political and constitutional thought in defence of *Algérie française*. Any engagements France was to enter into beyond the metropole, it was clear, must not be allowed to compromise the integrity of the Republic or the authority held by its government. The metropolitan Gaullists could thus take encouragement from the fact that their colleagues in the *Union française* supported their views on the need to maintain France's world role as a priority over its European one. Allegations of colonialism – which the RPF policy of prioritising the colonies over the construction of new European institutions might legitimately have attracted – were absent from the debate within the movement itself, even though RPF policy seemed to be moving away from what was essentially the basis of Gaullism's appeal in the colonies: the 'liberating' reputation of de Gaulle.

The Gaullist attack on EDC was always aimed both at the American support for the scheme – and by implication at American interference in French affairs – and at the French government that had envisaged such a degree of union. Gaullist criticism of the French government for failing to convince its Allies of the particular urgency of France's situation in defending both Europe and North Africa predated the official announcement of the EDC scheme. Debré, for example, complained that the government had, by remaining silent on questions affecting the Arab World and the Middle East, given the impression that France did not consider itself to have any special interest in North Africa other than the defence of its own citizens. For Debré, the government, not the Allies, was responsible for the apparent erosion of French influence on decisions affecting the security of North Africa: 'Notre présence en Afrique du Nord nous paraît une routine; nous ne croyons notre présence nécessaire que pour la seule protection des Français qui y vivent ou des intérêts français qui y sont implantés'.²¹ Jacques Soustelle, meanwhile, preferred to focus on the American dimension of the problem, issuing a strong warning to the United States of the

²¹ Debré, *CR*, 20.12.1951, *JORF*

dangers of restricting European defence matters to the continent alone, in the influential American journal *Foreign Affairs*.²² Soustelle argued that the rebirth of Germany within a pan-European organisation rather than in the narrow context of Franco-German agreement played into the hands of the Soviet Union:

The West resorted to such fictions as the Council of Europe, and dangerous efforts were made to 'pool' coal, steel and armed forces. Now Russia has decided to exploit her chosen weapon - the appeal of German unity. In the field of politics it is comparable to the atomic bomb.²³

According to Soustelle, the problems posed by German revival and the prospect of unity were not insurmountable, provided that they were addressed by a specific, bilateral Franco-German agreement, which would provide a solid basis for the construction of Europe.²⁴ One of the fundamental points of any such agreement was that:

It should be negotiated and signed by France in her full status as the French Union - that is, France as an African power as well as a European power - with all the consequences which that implies, economic and political.²⁵

Thus Soustelle's argument against EDC or other proposals for Western alliance to solve the German problem was that France should be allowed to sign bilateral agreements that would allow for the introduction of a non-European dimension to any European partnership.

The inclusion of the *Union française* in any form of European organisation was not negotiable for the Gaullists, and Soustelle's interest in making this point clear to American opinion demonstrates the extent to which a perceived American ignorance of, or hostility to, the French colonial presence was felt to underpin moves towards European union. The Gaullists, in 1952, were moving towards a situation in which a

²² J. Soustelle, 'France and Europe: A Gaullist View', in *Foreign Affairs*, 30 (1952), pp. 545-53

²³ *ibid*, 546

²⁴ *ibid*, 547

²⁵ *ibid*, 548

choice would have to be made between commitment to Europe or to the *Union française*, although Soustelle's attempt to put his case to the United States does indicate some willingness to find common ground on the importance of France's non-European role, rather than a firm desire to seek confrontation with Washington over the issue as subsequent Gaullist policy on the question of European security might suggest.

The balance between concerns for international security and French colonial interests in the Gaullists' championing of the Protectorates' inclusion in an alliance is hard to evaluate precisely; it might be said, however, that a continued French presence in the Protectorates was always seen by Gaullists as a means to ensure national security, in addition to any benefits that French rule might bring to settlers or native populations. At the beginning of the EDC debate in 1952, the Gaullists were already moving away from a conception of security based on the defence of Western Europe as a priority, towards the idea that French and European interests were actually under greater threat from nationalist activity in North Africa. After 1953, following the death of Stalin and the end of the Korean War, other western powers gradually began to accept the view that the most pressing Cold War threat was not necessarily in central Europe. It appears, however, that the Gaullists had already come to this conclusion, not in response to the apparent possibilities for East-West détente but as an indication that they were moving towards prioritising North Africa over Western Europe as early as 1952. This point – the Gaullists' shift in strategic thought predating that of the West in general – explains much of subsequent Gaullist policy on both North Africa and Western security.

As the EDC debate continued into 1953, the RPF became more uncompromising on the need to prioritise the Empire over European integration. During the longest parliamentary debate on the question of links between the proposed European organisation and the *Union française*, Michel Debré further developed the idea of France's necessary prioritisation of non-European interests, to such an extent that he

called into question the very compatibility of the *Union française* with any project for European unity. For Debré, this problem could only be resolved through the creation of 'l'Europe compatible avec l'Union française'.²⁶ Any European project, therefore, was to be judged according to whether its realisation would have harmful effects on France's non-European territories; the parallel British argument that the Commonwealth precluded too strong a commitment to Europe was suggested as a useful example to follow. Too narrow a focus on Europe presented a real danger, for a simple reason:

Elle [la France] est la seule puissance continentale qui ait encore des éléments de puissance mondiale. Elle est la seule puissance continental qui puisse encore être une puissance africaine. Que l'Union française reçoive ainsi un germe de mort par une mauvaise organisation européenne, nous perdons tout.²⁷

The risks inherent in European construction seemed, for many Gaullists, to outweigh the advantages that such a project might bring in terms of security. Indeed, as will be seen below, the question of security meant little to Gaullists unless its focus was principally on North Africa, the part of France considered to be potentially under threat and insufficiently defended.

Such views on France's vocation being essentially a non-European one were not confined to the RPF's elected representatives and acknowledged intellectual leaders, like Debré and Soustelle, who were engaged in parliamentary debate over EDC. The Gaullist press also contributed to the development of this renewed hope in the Empire, although it must be noted that the press interest in the subject came at a considerably later stage in the EDC debate, being expressed particularly towards the end of 1953 and in 1954, when the ratification of the treaty was already in some doubt. In the *Courrier d'Information Politique*, Louis Terrenoire highlighted the warm welcome received by de Gaulle in Africa. This was interpreted as proof that the RPF's insistence that the *Union française* was a more receptive and profitable field

²⁶ Debré, CR, 5.3.1953, *JORF*

²⁷ *ibid*

for French ambitions than Europe did indeed have some grounding in popular support and offer hope for the future. The *Outre-Mer* once again provided the impetus and inspiration for the regeneration and encouragement of metropolitan Gaullism. The same message was repeated to Terrenoire's readers later in 1953, on this occasion in connection with de Gaulle's visit to the Indian Ocean territories, described as a source of comfort and hope.²⁸

The increased interest in the *Union française* on the part of ordinary Gaullists, as the EDC affair continued, is evidenced by the subject's treatment in the militant newspaper *Paris-Jeunes*, edited by the young Gaullist Jacques Dauer and normally concerned exclusively with domestic politics, notably virulent anticommunism.²⁹

Paris-Jeunes developed at considerable length the theme of the Empire representing France's future, in articles written to appeal to the journal's young readers. Castigating the government for failing to fully develop the *Union française's* potential, it argued that a proper exploitation of its resources could satisfy young peoples' demands for employment, purpose and national pride, and could thus prove to be the salvation of the nation.³⁰ This glorious vision of France's future in the colonies was, of course, in stark contrast to the alternative vision, that of a European organisation doomed to failure and offering little hope: 'Créer une puissance mondiale n'est-ce pas plus exaltant que de tenter l'impossible fusion des peuples européens vieilliss, et séparés par des siècles de lutte'.³¹ For young Gaullists, the *Union française* was therefore

²⁸ Terrenoire in *Courrier d'Information Politique*, 18 (November 1953)

²⁹ Jacques Dauer - although later seen as on the left of the Gaullist movement in the Fifth Republic - was one of the so-called 'Gaullistes de choc', and was associated with the antiparliamentary, even violent, strain of Gaullism in the early Fourth Republic, attracting support among students and young workers on a platform of direct action against communism. *Paris-Jeunes* first appeared in February 1953 and survived in various guises until 1958, becoming increasingly strident in its attacks on the regime. Its focus was very much on the decay of domestic politics, with foreign affairs generally serving as a means of attacking the government's weakness.

³⁰ As in the case of Debré's pronouncements in parliament, the question of from what the nation was to be saved was never clarified, though one can presume the enemy to be a combination of communism and decadence.

³¹ M. Bonot, 'Pour une politique de l'Union Française', *Paris-Jeunes*, 24 (15.3.1954)

presented as the force that would make France a true world power, compared to the futile enterprise of uniting Europe, from which little benefit would accrue to France.³²

Once the Gaullists had established that a France restricted to Europe represented too limited a vision, the next stage of their offensive in favour of the *Union française* over the EDC was to argue that the alliance proposed in the treaty was itself too small in comparison with the presumed Soviet threat. As Soustelle argued:

The fundamental defect of the Atlantic alliance ... is that it is merely - Atlantic. Actually, it is restricted to the North Atlantic. It would have value as a regional section of a larger grouping, but in itself it is as inadequate as a breastplate covering half the chest or a helmet protecting the forehead but not the back of the neck. The danger facing the free nations is global. To parry it they must have a global strategy.³³

In this area, the Gaullists were able to develop their evolving ideas about a Soviet threat to France, and to Western Europe as a whole, coming via North Africa. The key fault of both the existing NATO treaty and the proposed EDC was their failure to include the whole of the Mediterranean in their sphere of influence. For the head of the RPF *Comité de Défense Nationale* and deputy, General de Monsabert, the only meaningful form of European security organisation was one designed according to the idea of Eurafrica, in which: 'Le théâtre Sud-Europe n'aurait dû être... qu'un sous-théâtre de l'Eurafrrique, dont les bases communes sont en Afrique du Nord. La campagne de libération à travers l'Italie en a illustré la démonstration'.³⁴ The precedent of France's wartime experience played a major role in the Gaullist campaign against EDC, as will be seen below with reference to the relations between

³² In contrast to the image of a stagnating Europe, the *Union française* was presented as offering employment and wealth. An ongoing theme of Gaullist policy towards the Empire in the final years of the Fourth Republic can be seen here, and will be developed further in subsequent chapters relating to the Gaullists' interest in the *mise en valeur* of Algeria and the Sahara as part of a movement of national regeneration.

³³ Soustelle, 'France and Europe', p. 550

³⁴ Gen. de Monsabert, *AN*, 24.1.1952, *JORF*. Monsabert was on this occasion speaking not for the RPF alone but as *rapporteur pour avis* of the Assembly's *Commission de la Défense Nationale*. This might therefore be seen as a case of Gaullist policy finding an expression in a non-partisan context. It is significant that this tended to occur principally on military and security questions during the Fourth Republic.

Gaullists and the military; its importance, clearly, was not limited to the obvious parallels suggested by the prospect of German rearmament, as the non-European aspects of the war effort also influenced Gaullist policy.

The non-European aspect of the Gaullists' opposition to EDC was equally evident in their concern that the very idea of Europe, detached from its colonies, as a third force able to rival the two superpowers, was unrealistic. The Gaullists' attack on this so-called 'third force' idea took two forms: firstly, insistence that Africa must be included in such a force, and secondly, dismissal of the idea that Europe alone could ever assert its independence of the superpowers. Developing the latter point at the 1952 *Assises*, Debré attacked those who claimed to see a world role for continental Europe: 'L'idée d'une Europe qui serait une troisième force, égale à celles des deux autres puissances, n'est pas une idée sérieuse du point de vue des réalités politiques'.³⁵ The alternative to the flawed concept of a 'small Europe' was to be found in the inclusion of France's African territories in a greater Europe, which would be capable of attaining world power status. Terrenoire argued that the rapid growth under way in Africa actually called for the creation of some kind of European body as an international force, but this Europe would only attain its international standing in conjunction with Africa.³⁶ The long-term future of the *Union française* was therefore to be tied in to French leadership of a greater Europe. The EDC, however, was clearly not to be seen in any way as the first step towards this goal: 'L'avenir de l'Europe, impossible sans l'Union française, se trouve à l'opposé des conceptions et des dispositions du traité sur l'armée européenne'.³⁷ The Gaullists' aim was to combat the creation of a narrow, continental Europe that would soon prove unable to keep pace with the rapid developments expected in the French colonies, and condemn France to a future in which she would be unable to take advantage of the Empire's potential while failing to find sufficient prestige and security in Europe alone.

³⁵ Debré, 'L'Europe', RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, 9-11.11.1952

³⁶ *Courrier d'Information Politique*, 15 (April 1953)

³⁷ *ibid*

While the Gaullists' opposition to the EDC, as has been seen, centred on the general need for France to retain an African presence, their campaign did focus more precisely on North Africa than on the sub-Saharan colonies. The catalyst for Gaullist reflection on North Africa's contribution to national and Western security was the decision, in 1952, to expand NATO to include Greece and Turkey. While welcoming this contribution to security in the Mediterranean, the RPF was disappointed that France's allies had not seen fit to expand NATO to embrace the entire Mediterranean theatre, with particular reference to Morocco and Tunisia.³⁸ For General Pierre Billotte, the admission of Greece and Turkey called into question the very nature of the so-called Atlantic Alliance:

J'aurais de loin préféré l'organisation d'un pacte régional méditerranéen, convenable, articulé avec le pacte de l'Atlantique et dans lequel seraient entrés tout naturellement, avec les puissances méditerranéennes, les Etats-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne dont les intérêts sont pleinement reconnus dans cette région.³⁹

The geographical unity of the North Atlantic Alliance having been somewhat disrupted by its enlargement to include Greece and Turkey, Billotte's remarks about the possibility of a Mediterranean pact emerging to occupy a parallel place to the Atlantic pact in Western security were not entirely unreasonable. They represent the beginning of a Gaullist attempt to find a system of collective security that would both include France's North African interests and reduce the nation's dependence on the Western European and Atlantic alliances. With West German rearmament within NATO likely by 1952, and the principal threat to France seeming now to come from Arab nationalism rather than Soviet communism, Billotte's response to the apparent prioritisation of Greece and Turkey over Morocco and Tunisia is an indication of Gaullist doubts about the value of greater concentration on Western Europe at the

³⁸ Algeria, due to its official status as an integral part of France, was already included in the NATO treaty.

³⁹ Billotte, *AN*, 24.1.1952, *JORF*. Billotte made clear at the beginning of his speech that he was speaking on behalf of the RPF as a whole.

expense of North Africa.⁴⁰ Indeed, Gaston Palewski attempted to introduce an amendment to the protocol before parliament, to the effect that the articles of the North Atlantic Treaty relating to Greece and Turkey would be valid only once Morocco and Tunisia had also been included. His logic for this was concerned as much with French power within the Alliance as with security in the Mediterranean:

Après la conférence de Lisbonne, il est bien évident que la question du commandement de la Méditerranée sera tranchée. Avec quel poids supplémentaire ne se présenterait pas alors la France si l'ensemble de la région stratégique de l'Afrique du Nord était inclus dans le pacte!⁴¹

Palewski's amendment, however, was defeated and the Gaullists' contribution to the parliamentary debate was limited to Billotte and Monsabert's insistence that steps be taken to incorporate the Protectorates into the Western Alliance.

Gaullist-Military relations over EDC

The Gaullists' opposition to EDC on grounds of strategic concerns and national security was not only significant in terms of its effect on the clarification of several key areas of policy; it also provided a forum for rapprochement between Gaullists and the military. Despite the somewhat strained relations between de Gaulle and much of the army during the war and the post-war *épuration*, the RPF nevertheless attracted a considerable amount of military support throughout the Fourth Republic.⁴² The main reason for *militaires* joining the RPF was a concern for France's national and international situation, including a perceived threat to the army from the Communists or, in some cases, from Europe, rather than any attachment to de Gaulle

⁴⁰ Although Greece and Turkey were certainly part of the Mediterranean theatre, they were clearly included in NATO in response to growing fears about Soviet ambitions in the Middle East, and because their geographical position made them ideal bases for a strike against the south of the Soviet Union. Thus their inclusion in NATO did not necessarily amount to a greater Western commitment to the Mediterranean.

⁴¹ G. Palewski, *AN*, 7.2.1952, *JORF*. Palewski was particularly concerned that the link between metropolitan France and French North Africa might no longer be under French command.

⁴² *Militaires* made up at least 5% of its membership, including twenty generals, twelve commanders and eighteen colonels, and a significant percentage of its national or regional leadership; eight generals served on its *Conseil National*. B. Lachaise, 'Les militaires et le Gaullisme au temps du RPF (1947-1955)', in *Militaires en République 1870-1962: les officiers, le pouvoir et la vie publique*, ed. by O. Forcade, E. Duhamel & P. Vial (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999), pp. 455-65.

himself.⁴³ The RPF was happy to use the prestige of its well-known military figures to attract support where it could benefit from playing the nationalist card, notably by using General Koenig in Alsace.⁴⁴ Military support for Gaullism - often in the form of contacts between individual Gaullists and influential generals - was to be a crucial factor in the demise of the Fourth Republic, and indeed in opposition to the regime from the defeat in Indochina onwards. However, it was during the campaign against EDC that Gaullists and *militaires* first began to find common ground on issues of national importance.

The French military élites, after 1945, despite uninterrupted action in the colonies, at first saw considerable prospects in the idea of Europe.⁴⁵ Around the time of the EDC proposal, however, emphasis shifted towards a perception of the Cold War being fought away from the Elbe.⁴⁶ The influence available in continental Europe alone, it was thought, was not sufficient to compensate for the implied loss of France's world role.⁴⁷ As the 1950s progressed, the idea of Europe was studied in military circles, notably at the influential *Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Défense Nationale*, but emphasis was increasingly on Europe's relations with the overseas territories. The idea of Eurafrica was seen by many officers as a potential bastion against communism in Europe, because of the value of Africa for its resources and as a territory from which the defence of Western Europe could be continued as it had been during the Second World War.⁴⁸

⁴³ Lachaise, 'Les militaires et le Gaullisme', p. 460

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 461-2

⁴⁵ C. d'Abzac-Epezy & P. Vial, 'In Search of a European Consciousness: French Military Elites and the Idea of Europe, 1947-1954', pp. 1-20

⁴⁶ The defeat in Indochina in 1954 confirmed this shift in military attention, from Europe to the *Union française*.

⁴⁷ C. d'Abzac-Epezy & P. Vial, 'In Search of a European consciousness...', p. 12

⁴⁸ Military planners openly acknowledged the precedent of the Second World War. See C. d'Abzac-Epezy & P. Vial, 'In Search of a European consciousness...', p. 5; Archives de l'Armée de Terre (Vincennes: *Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre*) (henceforth SHAT), 1H 1130/1 'Impératifs stratégiques de l'A.F.N.', 1952. It must be noted that Eurafrica never attained the status of official doctrine, perhaps because there remained a body of officers who preferred to concentrate uniquely on defending continental Europe, while others, with experience of fighting in Indochina, remained convinced that the decisive battle would take place far from Europe.

The Second World War had given rise to a dominant opinion within the armed forces, that Africa was essential to the defence of France, and that consequently any future defence pact that France might enter into with its Western allies must allow for the continued prominence of Africa in French strategic thinking. Thus, many officers were reluctant to contemplate the possibility of any European alliance that would take priority over France's African commitments.⁴⁹ Military planners even wondered if the African and European missions of France could be reconciled without damaging the unity of the army itself, such was its attachment to the view that France's strongest support could be found not in Europe but in the African colonies.⁵⁰

The common ground shared by the Gaullists and the military over North Africa and Western security also owed much to both sides' attachment to the historical importance of Africa. Dating back to the early colonial conquests, with a high point between the World Wars, the army's association with Africa was a source of considerable pride among officers, and a symbol of past *grandeur*. Even the division of the wartime period had not completely eroded the army's faith in Africa. Despite North Africa's new significance, acquired since 1943, as a Free French *lieu de mémoire*, the liberation campaigns in Italy and the South of France had nevertheless been conducted by a reconstituted *Armée d'Afrique*, with a force made up chiefly of non-Gaullists – fighting a parallel campaign to those of the Gaullists and Allies in Normandy – and of the internal resistance. Thus, the spirit of the *Armée d'Afrique* had managed to survive the apparent Gaullist take-over of the liberation era, largely because many of the colonial army's aims seemed close to those of the Fourth Republic Gaullists. The themes of the permanence of French presence in Africa, French *grandeur* on a world scale being achieved through this overseas role, and a degree of caution regarding European or American-led alliances – perhaps, for non-Gaullist *militaires*, a legacy of the prioritisation of the Normandy campaigns over

⁴⁹ The most comprehensive account of the views of the military regarding the relationship between European co-operation and the African colonies is C. d'Abzac-Epezy & P. Vial, 'In Search of a European Consciousness...'

⁵⁰ C. d'Abzac-Epezy & P. Vial, 'In search of a European Consciousness', p. 5

those of Italy during the liberation and in commemoration of the war effort – were shared by Gaullists and *militaires*. The EDC campaign highlighted the closeness of Gaullist and military views and prepared the ground for future co-operation between the two groups.

Given the relatively high proportion of military figures within Gaullism, it is not surprising that when the Gaullists adopted a policy of highlighting the shortcomings of France's security arrangements, they should seek to attract military support by clearly stating their faith in the capacities of a properly constituted and managed military force. At the 1951 RPF *Assises*, General Koenig outlined plans for increased troop numbers and simplified command structures, which were designed to reconstitute effective and coherent national armed forces. Koenig stated clearly that what was needed was not a closer focus on European defence alliances, but rather the reconstruction of an 'Armée d'Afrique', which would include a unified command for the North African area as a whole.⁵¹ On North Africa, Koenig claimed, considerable common ground already existed between the views of the army – notably Marshals Juin and Leclerc, who had tried to convince governments of the need for greater focus on military organisation in Africa – and those of the Gaullists, with both groups believing that the North African territories were 'simplement le prolongement autour du lac méditerranéen'.⁵²

Gaullist agreement with the military, particularly on the question of the need for increased troop numbers to meet France's international role, continued throughout the EDC debate. The 1952 RPF *Assises*, for example, witnessed calls for the armed forces to be properly equipped, and for a vigorous recruitment campaign to be launched to tackle the lack of suitable personnel. While acknowledging that the government's military policy had allowed the army to meet its NATO commitments

⁵¹ Koenig, 'Rapport sur la Défense Nationale', RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Nancy*, 23-25.11.1951

⁵² *ibid*

by the end of 1952,⁵³ the defence spokesman, General Gilliot,⁵⁴ continued to stress the need for further recruitment, suggesting that the NATO forces were envisaged as only meeting part of France's military obligations. With North Africa only partly covered by NATO, and the war in Indochina showing no sign of abating, the RPF was therefore calling for a substantial show of government commitment to a military effort beyond France's NATO role. Gilliot underlined, in particular, the fact that while French forces outside Europe were nominally not concerned by the EDC proposal, they could nevertheless only be reinforced with the approval of the Atlantic command, suggesting that France should be looking to take greater responsibility for the security of its overseas interests than the present form of alliance seemed to allow. Echoing the calls that had been made in parliament at the beginning of the year for inclusion of Morocco and Tunisia in NATO, the *Assises* passed a motion on Atlantic policy that called for the immediate enlargement of the Atlantic Pact to take into account the Soviet strategy of 'dissociation interne et externe'⁵⁵ - attacking the West through support for anticolonial movements, as the Gaullists had for some time been concerned about in the Protectorates and Indochina. Faced with this strategy, the RPF now saw the proposed European military alliance as a completely inadequate response to the Soviet threat to both Europe and French North Africa. The Gaullists were not yet advocating complete prioritisation of colonial affairs over the Western Alliance – that would not occur until the outbreak of rebellion in Algeria and moves towards détente – but it was already clear that any European or Atlantic Alliance was not seen as adequately responding to France's need for a role on the international stage. Gaullists increasingly envisaged national defence as being centred on North Africa; the further deterioration of the situation in that region during 1954 confirmed their assessment of the dangers of a Eurocentric policy.

⁵³ Twelve French divisions had been guaranteed to NATO by the end of 1952, in line with France's commitments to its partners at the 1952 Lisbon Conference.

⁵⁴ Gilliot was RPF deputy for the Marne *département*.

⁵⁵ RPF archives, *Assises Nationales de Paris*, 9-11.11.1952, 'Motion sur la politique Atlantique'

Conclusion

By May 1954 and the fall of Dien Bien Phu - signifying humiliating defeat in Indochina - the Gaullists had cultivated important alliances in military circles.⁵⁶ The end of the debate over EDC coincided with the eruption of urgent colonial questions, beginning with the loss of Indochina, into national political debate. From this point until the fall of the republic in 1958, Gaullists believed that any official commitment to Europe – whether political, economic or military – was inevitably made at the expense of the *Union française*, and they increasingly found support for this view in military circles. Furthermore, with Indochina lost, the focus of attention was now clearly North Africa, considered to be under greater threat than before because of the demonstration of France's weakness in South East Asia. The first test of the Gaullists' newfound resolve to prioritise colonial – and, specifically, North African – affairs after Dien Bien Phu and the defeat of EDC came in the form of the government's plan to grant 'internal autonomy' to Morocco and Tunisia in July 1954. For the military, the focus of the revolutionary, ideological warfare they had suffered in Indochina now shifted to North Africa, as the temptation to see Arab nationalism as a Trojan horse for Soviet communism became stronger. By the end of 1954, with rebellion under way in Algeria and unrest continuing in the Protectorates, the Gaullists' decision to prioritise the retention of North Africa over a retreat to Europe at the time of the EDC debate meant they were committed to spend the final four years of the Fourth Republic arguing that France's very survival, and the welfare of the Western world, depended upon there being no further distractions from the effort to restore France's world role through prioritising its campaign in North Africa.

⁵⁶ The Gaullists' stance over the EDC and the *Union française* also proved popular with *anciens combattants* associations, as will be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEFEAT IN INDOCHINA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES: CHANGE IN NORTH AFRICA AND EVOLUTION OF GAULLIST STRATEGY

The fall of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 is widely acknowledged as a turning point in the history of the Fourth Republic's colonial policy. Defeat in Indochina raised colonial problems to a new level of urgency and prominence in metropolitan political debate, and was particularly influential in that it focused public opinion on the threat to the Empire for the first time. The themes raised by the defeat – the spread of communism along with nationalism; the unreliability of France's Western Allies in colonial affairs; the lack of support provided by government to the army in the colonies; the signals that the fall of Dien Bien Phu sent out about France's international status – were to dominate the remaining years of the Fourth Republic. For Gaullists, the loss of Indochina was viewed with a curious combination of horror and masked optimism. In the summer of 1954, with the defeat of the EDC and the belated awakening of general interest in the themes of threat to the *Union française* and lack of government commitment to France's overseas role, some Gaullists felt that the decisive moment of national *redressement* that had been awaited since 1947 had finally arrived. The dramatic defeat was even viewed by some in a similar way to that of 1940, such a great shock to French *grandeur* that it would, in time, prove to be the catalyst for national renewal and a return to greatness. While such hopes proved to be optimistic, the legacy of Dien Bien Phu was present throughout the final years of the Fourth Republic, with a growing sense that the regime's final crisis was now likely to arise from colonial problems. North Africa assumed a new importance as the symbol of France's last chance to retain international prestige, and of governments' commitment to the nation.

The importance of the loss of Indochina to the Gaullists was not, however, purely indicative of a general atmosphere of crisis and urgency.¹ Concrete lessons were

¹ Frédéric Turpin has argued that Indochina, like the Saar and Morocco in previous years, was used by Gaullists as a means to attack the regime, rather than as an issue about which they were genuinely

drawn from the events in South East Asia, which were to inform Gaullist attitudes to the problems in Algeria and the Protectorates between 1954 and 1958. In domestic politics, too, Dien Bien Phu marked a turning point in Gaullist strategy for a return to power; the blow to the nation's confidence in its rulers led Gaullists to believe more strongly that a mass rallying round de Gaulle as saviour was possible and could be organised in response to a colonial emergency. To this end, the Gaullists stepped up their efforts to attract support and form alliances outside conventional parliamentary circles. The *malaise* in the army after Dien Bien Phu, the anger felt by *anciens combattants*, the fear among settler populations, and the heightened sense of urgency and crisis on the nationalist, anticommunist right all provided opportunities for the Gaullists to exploit the loss of Indochina.

In 1954, the most pressing problem, after Indochina,² was the question of Morocco and Tunisia. The fall of Dien Bien Phu must, therefore, be looked at principally in terms of its effect on Gaullist views of the problems in the protectorates. The chief developments brought about by events in Indochina were a strengthened conviction that France's allies – in particular the United States – were more likely to constitute a threat than a source of support for France's overseas aims, and a more sophisticated view of colonial nationalism, its links with communism, and even the necessity of negotiating with the nationalists in certain circumstances. The Gaullists did not by any means become anticolonialists after Dien Bien Phu, but they did begin to realise that dialogue with carefully chosen representatives in Morocco and Tunisia might

concerned. F. Turpin, 'Le RPF et la Guerre d'Indochine' in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle et le RPF (1947-1955)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1998), pp. 530-40, 539

² There is, indeed, evidence that Gaullists were not particularly concerned with Indochina, other than in terms of its value as a means of asserting their patriotic credentials and opposition to both the government and the Communists. Jacques Foccart, for example, states that de Gaulle felt somewhat distanced from the war in Indochina. See P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle: entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard* (Paris: Fayard/Jeune Afrique, 1995), p. 91. In the light of the Gaullists' emphasis on the imperatives of the Cold War, as outlined in previous chapters, the Gaullists' concerns about the future of the *Union française* in the early 1950s were focused more closely on the more strategically important North and West African territories.

prove more constructive than the centralised and authoritarian practices of the recent Residents-General.

This did not mean, however, that the Gaullists unconditionally welcomed the opening of negotiations with the Viet Minh in 1954.³ While De Gaulle had announced in April 1954 that the priority in Indochina must be finding an end to the conflict, and had welcomed the Geneva peace conference for this reason, the General, as ever, left scope for different interpretations of his words by alluding to the inevitable internationalisation of the problem that would arise from the conference.⁴ If negotiation was to be welcomed, international 'interference' clearly was not, and the need to negotiate should not prevent the government from insisting upon a solution that preserved France's interests. Given this lead by de Gaulle, the Gaullists' reactions to the situation in Indochina ranged from Chaban-Delmas' defence of Mendès-France against accusations of abandoning Indochina,⁵ to Debré's attack on the Prime Minister for exaggerating the need for withdrawal.⁶ Demonstrating the Gaullists' growing awareness of the potential effect of colonial conflicts on international relations, the Gaullist deputy Frédéric-Dupont insisted somewhat dramatically that not only French interests were at stake in Indochina, but also the future of the free world: 'Il y a en Indochine les intérêts français à sauvegarder ... il y a aussi la liberté du monde'.⁷ While negotiation was generally accepted as the best policy for France in Indochina, there was considerable

³ Turpin has demonstrated that the Gaullists were moving towards support for negotiation, even without an outright military victory, in order to save face, in the second half of 1953. F. Turpin, 'Le RPF et la Guerre d'Indochine', 538

⁴ Gaullist doubts about the benefits of pursuing the war in Indochina at all costs had, indeed, been expressed as early as October 1953 by Christian Fouchet, who had spoken in parliament of the need to avoid a disaster even at the expense of acknowledging defeat. His comments, however, failed to have the effect on the Gaullists in general that de Gaulle's public pronouncements inevitably did. De Gaulle, Press Conference, 7.4.1954, in C. de Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, vol. 2: *Dans l'attente, 1948-1958* (Paris: Plon, 1970), pp. 613-4; Fouchet, *AN*, 20.10.1953, quoted in F. Turpin, 'Le RPF et la Guerre d'Indochine', 537

⁵ J. Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires pour demain* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), pp. 241-2

⁶ M. Debré, *Trois Républiques pour une France: mémoires*, vol. 2 1946-1958: *agir* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988), p. 265

⁷ Frédéric-Dupont, *AN*, 5.3.1954, *JORF*

resentment that the Western Allies had failed to provide sufficient and unequivocal support. This theme of Gaullist discourse was to become a familiar feature of responses to the war in Algeria.

Few Gaullists held official positions relating to Indochina, perhaps due as much to the relatively low priority that Gaullists afforded the region, as to the effect of Gaullist refusal to compromise with the 'system'.⁸ Indeed, General Koenig was offered command of the forces in Indochina in 1954 but refused. Koenig's reluctance to accept such a high position owed much to his feeling that Indochina was already a lost cause by 1954; only massive reinforcements in the form of conscripts could turn the situation to France's advantage, and even then, the only benefit that could be expected would be a stronger bargaining position at the peace conference.⁹ Furthermore, Koenig is reported as having persuaded colleagues, notably Soustelle, that Indochina was already lost to France.¹⁰ The loss of Indochina was nevertheless difficult for Gaullists to accept, believing as they did that a stronger government could have made a difference at an earlier stage of the war. Frédéric-Dupont, in particular, was a strong critic of the armistice, accusing the government of betraying loyal populations and abandoning South-East Asia to communism.¹¹ It could be argued that Gaullist determination to avoid a similar loss of control over events in North Africa was therefore strengthened. For Soustelle, indeed, the need to concentrate on maintaining peace in Africa was itself a reason to disengage as quickly and efficiently as possible from Indochina.¹²

⁸ While Gaullists had been participating in the 'system' since 1952, it could be argued that the final stages of the EDC affair in early 1954 temporarily reinforced their opposition to the regime, thus preventing them from taking a more active part in Indochinese affairs.

⁹ L. Terrenoire, *De Gaulle 1947-1954: pourquoi l'échec? Du RPF à la traversée du désert* (Paris: Plon, 1981), pp. 272-7

¹⁰ B. Ullmann, *Jacques Soustelle: le mal aimé* (Paris: Plon, 1995), pp. 181-2

¹¹ Frédéric-Dupont, *AN*, 22.7.1954, *JORF*. Another Gaullist deputy, Pierre de Bénouville, took this argument further, accusing the government of abandoning the Christians of Asia, in a foretaste of some of the Gaullists' attempts to interpret subsequent problems in North Africa as part of an aggressive onslaught of Islam against Christianity.

¹² Soustelle, *AN*, 9.6.1954, *JORF*

If Indochina provided clear lessons for the French authorities on the need to act decisively in North Africa, Gaullists feared that it also served as an inspiration to the nationalists in Morocco and Tunisia. Christian Fouchet warned in parliament in May 1954 that French residents in Morocco were already receiving threats of a 'Moroccan Dien Bien Phu',¹³ while General de Monsabert stressed in parliament the need to avoid following 'une route qui nous conduirait fatalement de Vietminh en Istiqlal'.¹⁴ Along with nationalist activity, a second potential threat to the French presence in North Africa arising from Dien Bien Phu was the question of internationalisation. The French acceptance of an international conference on Indochina carried the danger of legitimising any other attempts to resolve problems in the *Union française* by international diplomatic means. Indeed, the new prominence of internationalisation as a way of dealing with colonial problems was, after Dien Bien Phu, one of the most important issues the Gaullists had to address in their attitude to North Africa.¹⁵ The Gaullists – already warning of the nationalists' links with Egypt and Libya¹⁶ – now had to develop a response to the reality of the superpowers' interest in the French Empire as demonstrated in Indochina, and to the involvement of the international community as a whole as demonstrated at Geneva. The United States, Soviet Union and United Nations, hitherto seen as potential sources of interference in the case of French weakness, were from 1954 reluctantly acknowledged as a major influence on events in North Africa. It is possible to trace the Gaullists' close focus on the international elements of the Algerian War – the roles of the UN, US, other NATO Allies, and the USSR – to the lessons they learned from the way in which the war in Indochina ended. Indeed, Pierre Messmer, Minister for the Army in de Gaulle's Fifth Republic government and a senior colonial civil

¹³ Fouchet, *AN*, 11.5.1954, quoted in J-R Tournoux, *Secrets d'Etat* (Paris: Plon, 1960), p. 71

¹⁴ de Monsabert, *AN*, 2.6.1954, *JORF*. General Boyer de Latour, Resident General in Tunisia, confirms that the fall of Dien Bien Phu did indeed strengthen resistance to France in the protectorates. P. Boyer de Latour, *Vérités sur l'Afrique du Nord* (Paris: Plon, 1956), p. 54

¹⁵ A. Hartley, *Gaullism: The Rise and Fall of a Political Movement* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 127

¹⁶ See for example the *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 215 & 226 (7.1.1954 & 3.6.1954), which stressed the need to be aware of the specific links between Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco rather than vague links between nationalism and communism.

servant during the 1950s, confirms this development by acknowledging that the Gaullists, in the aftermath of Dien Bien Phu, were guilty of over-emphasising the international aspects of the North African situation, as a result of the accepted idea that it was the proximity of China that had made it possible for the Viet Minh to defeat the French forces in Indochina.¹⁷

Military affairs played a major part in the adaptation of Gaullist strategy towards North Africa after the loss of Indochina. The campaign had taught the French military much about the use of guerrilla tactics and psychological warfare, lessons that the Gaullists claimed the government had failed to learn.¹⁸ Furthermore, the Gaullists insisted that the new methods of warfare learned in Indochina must be applied to the problems in North Africa. In this respect, the influence of Indochina on Gaullist policy dealing with North Africa for the remaining years of the Fourth Republic was considerable, as it was frequently on issues relating to the military response to nationalist activity that the Gaullists found most popular support and were able to put most pressure on government. Jacques Chaban-Delmas, a future Defence Minister during the Algerian War, was convinced, in 1954, that the reason for the defeat in Indochina had been a failure to appreciate the nature of the conflict and adopt the correct strategy.¹⁹ The officers returning from Indochina drew the same conclusions about reasons for the defeat: the enemy had been under-estimated, and the determination and sense of purpose that combat in the name of a well-defined ideology conferred upon the Viet Minh had not been appreciated until too late in the conflict. The effect of Dien Bien Phu on the officer class was so profound that the Gaullists' role as spokesmen for a completely new approach to colonial campaigns left them well placed in 1954 to benefit from military discontent with governments demonstrating a lack of commitment to military effort. The need for an *idéologie nationale* to oppose the ideologically-driven anti-colonialist guerrillas was expressed

¹⁷ P. Messmer, *Après tant de batailles* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992), p. 270

¹⁸ R. Dronne, *AN*, 1.6.1954, *JORF*

¹⁹ J. Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires pour demain*, pp. 238-9

simultaneously, in 1954, by Indochina veterans and Gaullist politicians, whose existing conviction that wars of decolonisation were becoming a conflict between 'Western' or 'civilised' values and totalitarian ideology found considerable support among those with first-hand experience of Viet-Minh tactics of indoctrination.²⁰ Yet, in terms of policy, little changed in 1954. The Gaullists in parliament defended the military's effort in Indochina and stressed that overwhelming numerical superiority and more appropriate tactics might have made a difference,²¹ but with neither officers nor Gaullists in a position to influence government policy, their shared assessment of the defeat in Indochina counted for little in practical terms. Where a more significant coming-together of Gaullists and *militaires* did occur in 1954 was in the field of opposition to the regime in general, as will be discussed in more detail below.

In more concrete terms, a Gaullist influence on military policy in the immediate aftermath of Dien Bien Phu can be seen in General Koenig's spell as Minister of Defence between June and August 1954.²² As soon as the war ended in Indochina, Koenig promised two further divisions for North Africa, demonstrating a commitment to avoid the same mistakes of insufficient numbers of troops that had undermined the French effort in Indochina.²³ Yet Koenig's spell as Minister of Defence was too brief to implement any of the strategic lessons of Indochina.²⁴ Furthermore, in the absence of a declared rebellion, his task in respect of North Africa was simply to maintain order,²⁵ and approval for a more vigorous military

²⁰ On the effect of the war in Indochina on the army, see G. Kelly, 'The French Army Re-enters Politics', *Political Science Quarterly*, 76 (1961), pp. 367-92

²¹ General de Monsabert, in particular, considered that the defeat in Indochina had been caused partly by insufficient and poorly-prepared troops, and warned that such errors must not be repeated in North Africa. *AN*, 2.6.1954, *JORF*

²² Koenig's acceptance of this post, whereas two months earlier he had declined the command in Indochina, demonstrates the hope that the Gaullist invested in Mendès-France's ability to achieve results.

²³ Boyer de Latour, *Vérités sur l'Afrique du Nord*, p. 55

²⁴ On Koenig's spell as Minister of Defence in 1954, see P. Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal, le Général Koenig', in *Militaires en République 1870-1962: les officiers, le pouvoir et la vie publique*, ed. by O. Forcade, E. Duhamel & P. Vial (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999), pp. 255-89, 264-9

²⁵ C.A. Julien, *Et la Tunisie devint indépendante (1951-1957)* (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1985), pp. 157-8

campaign in the protectorates would surely not have been forthcoming from Mendès-France, who was concerned with finding a political solution to the problems in the region and still preoccupied with the EDC.

Breakthrough in Morocco and Tunisia: Government attempts to learn from Indochina

The link between defeat in Indochina and the problems in North Africa was as clear to Mendès-France as it was to the Gaullists. During the summer of 1954, therefore, the Prime Minister sought to take advantage of the short-lived period of political goodwill he was enjoying, to attempt to move away from the *impasse* that years of mistrust and insufficient reform had created in the protectorates. Gaullist reactions to Mendès-France's policies on Morocco and Tunisia reveal the extent to which their attitudes to the problems of the *Union française* had altered in the light of events in the Far East. Mendès-France's policies on Morocco and Tunisia are especially interesting to the study of Gaullist attitudes because of Christian Fouchet's crucial role in the reforms, in his capacity as Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs. Fouchet's participation in both government and colonial reform did not elicit the criticism that might be expected of Gaullists, though it was by no means unanimously approved. Gaullist indulgence towards Mendès-France can be explained to some extent by the parallels that Gaullists saw between him and de Gaulle; Mendès-France has, indeed, retained a place in Gaullist mythology that sees him as the closest to a Gaullist-style Prime Minister that the Fourth Republic was capable of producing. That many Gaullists have expressed admiration for Mendès-France despite the latter's fierce opposition to de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 and refusal to accept the post of Minister of the Interior in de Gaulle's first government indicates the esteem in which he was held by Gaullists. Yet, in 1954, their admiration for Mendès-France owed as much to his policies as his style of

leadership.²⁶ He mirrored Gaullist attitudes to Indochina, estimating that the best solution to the crisis was a withdrawal without further unnecessary losses of troops and with as little loss of prestige as possible. On North Africa, therefore, Mendès-France already benefited from a reserve of approval among Gaullists when he announced, on July 31, 1954, his plan to grant Tunisia and Morocco 'internal autonomy', amounting to a significant devolution of power with the exception of foreign and defence policy.²⁷

The reputation that Mendès-France enjoyed as a result of the resolution of the Indochina problem meant that Gaullists initially set aside their reservations about the liberal policy he intended to pursue in North Africa. Chaban-Delmas felt that, as the government's Tunisian policy was inspired by its success in Indochina, it too was likely to prove correct,²⁸ while Foccart reports that, with Indochina in the past, de Gaulle approved Mendès-France's Carthage speech announcing internal autonomy.²⁹ Even General de Monsabert, a conservative Gaullist and one of the fiercest critics of the regime's policies in North Africa in subsequent years, felt, in June 1954, that internal autonomy was worth trying, providing that the limits were strictly and clearly defined.³⁰ The Gaullist press, too, broadly welcomed Mendès-France's policy, with the *Lettre à l'Union Française* expressing hope that the events in Indochina would lead to reflection on the rest of the Empire, particularly North

²⁶ Gaston Palewski sums up the admiration that many Gaullists had for 'un Pierre Mendès-France dont le style nous plaisait et qui nous semblait, à juste titre, doué de cette qualité essentielle de l'homme d'Etat qui consistait à aller droit aux difficultés au lieu d'essayer de les contourner ou de les ignorer'. G. Palewski, *Mémoires d'action (1924-1974)* (Paris: Plon, 1988), p. 261. Philippe Vial, however, argues that the Gaullists' support for Mendès-France in 1954 owed more to the atmosphere of crisis and *salut public* of the time than to any real faith in the Prime Minister. P. Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal...', p. 265

²⁷ In July 1954, for example, the *Républicains Sociaux* newspaper, *Les Idées... Les Faits* stated that Mendès-France had produced the best solution to the Indochina problem. R. Frey, 'L'heure de vérité', in *Les Idées... Les Faits*, 3 (July 1954)

²⁸ Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires pour demain*, p. 242

²⁹ P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle*, p. 115

³⁰ De Monsabert in *Paris-Jeunes*, 29 (1.6.1954). De Monsabert stated more clearly than most Gaullists what he considered the limits of internal autonomy to be: defence, foreign relations, security and the economy were to remain entirely in French control.

Africa,³¹ and then, a few weeks later, proclaiming itself satisfied with the progress so far on Morocco and Tunisia.³² Indeed, the *Lettre*'s only complaint about the reforms announced by Mendès-France at Carthage was that they contained little that was new, a comment echoed by General Catroux's biographer, who claims that the essence of the announcement of July 1954 had already been proposed by Catroux in 1953 and outlined in 1952 in his book on Lyautey, to no avail.³³ In 1952-3, however, Catroux's liberalism on North Africa had been rejected not only by the government to which it was proposed, but also by the RPF. By 1954, partly owing to the shock of Dien Bien Phu, Mendès-France succeeded where liberal Gaullists had failed, in winning over the majority of the Gaullists in parliament to a plan of reform for the protectorates.

It would, however, be wrong to state that Mendès-France's 'internal autonomy' plan met absolutely no resistance among Gaullists. Indeed, one might argue that, without the extraordinary circumstances created by Dien Bien Phu, and the *Républicains Sociaux*' uncharacteristic desire to avoid another governmental collapse, the new Moroccan and Tunisian policy might have fallen victim to the same Gaullist obstruction that had defeated other Fourth Republic initiatives. The proposed reforms were not well received by the Gaullists in Morocco, who saw the new government as being determined to 'liquidate' the *Union française*:

En somme, la devise du gouvernement, en ce qui concerne la France d'Outre-Mer c'est 'On liquide et l'on s'en va'...Jamais notre position, à nous Français du Maroc, n'a été aussi menacée... Et que notre compagnon Christian Fouchet soit ministre de la Tunisie et du Maroc ne change rien à l'affaire.³⁴

³¹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 243 (22.7.54)

³² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 248 (9.9.54)

³³ H. Lerner, *Catroux* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990), pp. 313-6. See also G. Catroux, *Lyautey le Marocain* (Paris: Hachette, 1952)

³⁴ RPF archives, Maroc, 51/1, Groupe RPF de Casablanca, 'Bulletin No 12', October 1954

Fouchet's role as a key figure in the implementation of the reforms made no difference in this case, as Mendès-France's style of leadership could be interpreted as demonstrating that individual ministers had little influence on policy. However, as has been seen in chapter 3 (pp. 67-9), the RPF federations in Morocco were already known within the Gaullist leadership as the repository of some of the most extreme conservative views, and in this respect their opposition to the new policy is hardly surprising and perhaps had less effect in Paris than had been hoped. Indeed, a report of July 1954, on the RPF in Morocco concluded that the local membership had unrealistic expectations, a polarised view of the North African problem, and had completely failed to take account of the changing international situation, Indochina, the Geneva peace conference, or the growing international interest in France's behaviour in its colonies.³⁵

A more immediate threat to the evolution of a liberal Gaullist attitude towards the status of Morocco and Tunisia was the existence of dissent within the parliamentary group, in respect of Fouchet's ministerial activities.³⁶ Many of the Gaullists' concerns focused on the fact that the concept of the *Union française* – a Gaullist creation – did not seem to be important to Mendès-France; Raymond Dronne complained, for example, that the Geneva peace treaty did not mention the *Union française* as it ought to have done.³⁷ Koenig, too, although not opposed to reform in Morocco and Tunisia, expressed fears that Mendès-France's policies might mean the end of the *Union française* as the Gaullists had envisaged it.³⁸ Mendès-France was acceptable to Gaullists as a man of action, but his apparent disregard for the constitutional framework devised by the Gaullists for the Empire reminded them that

³⁵ RPF archives, Maroc, 51/1, anonymous, 'Note sur la situation au Maroc', July 1954

³⁶ The Gaullists' views on Morocco and Tunisia, as opposed to their immediate responses to Fouchet and Mendès-France's policies, will be examined in more detail in chapter 6.

³⁷ Dronne, *AN*, 23.7.1954, *JORF*

³⁸ Koenig, *AN*, 9.6.1954, *JORF*. Much of the Gaullists' criticism of Mendès-France reflected their existing concern for the security implications of any weakening of the *Union française*: de Monsabert insisted that national defence was only possible within the framework of a French North Africa: 'La défense nationale est une du Rhin au Sahara'. De Monsabert in *Paris-Jeunes*, 29 (1.6.1954)

he was not entirely to be trusted in his reforms. As for the manner in which reform was being implemented, Michel Debré was concerned that not only was the government proceeding too quickly, but it was also neglecting to treat the whole of North Africa together, which the Gaullists had been advocating during the previous years.³⁹ Another Gaullist on the 'activist', uncompromising wing of the movement, Pierre Lefranc, expressed concern that excessively hasty action in Tunisia might have unwelcome consequences in Morocco and Algeria.⁴⁰ The *Républicains Sociaux* as a whole argued that the crises in Morocco and Tunisia had little in common except the nationalism that had caused them.⁴¹ In the light of events in Indochina, where the French had seen their credibility undermined by their attempt to deal only with a so-called *interlocuteur qualifié* – the unpopular Emperor Bao Dai – the Gaullists remained concerned about the existence of suitably qualified and authoritative negotiating partners in Morocco and Tunisia. In Morocco, the deposition of the Sultan meant that there was considerably less chance of finding a reliable partner and great risk of repeating the errors of Indochina,⁴² whereas in Tunisia, the question of dealing with an unpopular and contested sovereign did not arise.⁴³ The Gaullist deputy Bouvier O'Cottureau, president of the *Groupe Parlementaire d'Amitié Franco-Marocaine*, insisted that while change was welcome in Morocco, the deposed Sultan could not be considered an *interlocuteur valable* and the identification of a negotiating partner was necessary before any serious reform could be attempted in Morocco.⁴⁴ Thus, the *Républicains Sociaux* considered the government correct to have limited its dealings in the first instance to negotiations

³⁹ It must be noted, however, that Debré's criticism of Mendès-France on these grounds is more forcefully expressed in his memoirs than it was at the time. Debré, *Trois républiques pour une France: mémoires*, vol. 2, pp. 265-6

⁴⁰ P. Lefranc, *Avec qui vous savez* (Paris: Plon, 1979)

⁴¹ 'Dossier Marocain et Dossier Tunisien', in *Les Idées... Les Faits*, 4 (September 1954)

⁴² Gaullists were divided as to whether the deposition of the Sultan and the instalment of a puppet, pro-French replacement were beneficial or harmful to the prospects for a peaceful and satisfactory solution to the Moroccan problem. The situation in Tunisia, however, was universally acknowledged to be more straightforward.

⁴³ Significantly, Fouchet himself defended the government's policy of negotiating with Tunisia on the basis that it had been possible to identify and support a clear leader. *AN*, 10.8.1954, *JORF*

⁴⁴ Bouvier O'Cottureau in *Paris-Jeunes*, 29 (1.6.1954)

with Tunisia,⁴⁵ despite the apparent contradiction that this raised with the Gaullists' stated aim of treating the whole of North Africa together.

Christian Fouchet himself embodied the Gaullists' situation at the time of the Mendès-France government, faced with the dilemma of supporting the only politician seemingly capable of sustaining reform – at the expense of the 'purity' of Gaullism – or retreating into the uncompromising non-participation policy of the early Fourth Republic. Accounts of the degree of Fouchet's commitment to Mendès-France's North African policy vary. Chaban-Delmas, for example, a supporter of participation in government and of the 'internal autonomy' plan, claims that Fouchet considered resigning over the proposal, and that Chaban and Koenig persuaded him to remain in office.⁴⁶ Boyer de Latour, however, who remained opposed to concessions in North Africa until the end of the Fourth Republic, presents Koenig as reluctant to implement Mendès-France's plan.⁴⁷ Soustelle, moreover, claims to have been offered the Moroccan and Tunisian ministry before Fouchet, and to have declined not because of doubts about Mendès-France – Soustelle considered the Prime Minister to have achieved a positive outcome in Indochina – but rather because de Gaulle refused to approve Soustelle's appointment.⁴⁸

The apparent confusion among Gaullists over Fouchet's appointment and his degree of responsibility for Mendès-France's actions reveals doubts about whether the policy pursued in the summer of 1954 in North Africa, in response to Dien Bien Phu, was a 'Gaullist' one. Fouchet received an ambiguous response from de Gaulle when asking the General's advice before entering into government, the latter not forbidding his participation in government, as he had done in the case of Soustelle,⁴⁹ but refusing to grant Fouchet an interview on the grounds that he was entering into

⁴⁵ 'Dossier Marocain et Dossier Tunisien', in *Les Idées... Les Faits*, 4 (September 1954)

⁴⁶ Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires pour demain*, p. 243

⁴⁷ Boyer de Latour, *Vérités sur l'Afrique du Nord*, p. 56

⁴⁸ B. Ullmann, *Jacques Soustelle: le mal aimé* (Paris: Plon, 1995), pp. 182-3

⁴⁹ Ullmann, pp. 182-3

the regime.⁵⁰ According to Jacques Foccart, however, de Gaulle approved of the policy announced by Mendès-France at Carthage in the company of Fouchet and continued to demonstrate a liberal approach to Moroccan and Tunisian affairs.⁵¹ Fouchet's own opinion was that the progress proposed by Mendès-France was faster than he had envisaged, and that most Gaullists, even after Dien Bien Phu, saw only slow evolution in North Africa as possible and were reluctant to support a non-Gaullist plan.⁵² Most historians have interpreted these Gaullist doubts about the pace of change as evidence that Fouchet was little more than a token conservative in the Mendès-France government, fulfilling the same function as Marshal Juin, who also accompanied the Prime Minister to Tunisia on July 31: to appease the settlers and the army.⁵³ While Fouchet did entertain some doubts about Mendès-France's policy, and faced opposition from within the Gaullist movement, it can be argued that his spell as Minister for Tunisian and Moroccan Affairs amounted to more than a token Gaullist presence in a sensitive position. The shock of Dien Bien Phu had convinced many Gaullists that the time was right for decisive action to prevent similar disastrous losses elsewhere. Such a shift in attitudes – admittedly only from outright hostility to change to limited acceptance of carefully managed reform – represented an evolution

⁵⁰ J. Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'opposition* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 309-10

⁵¹ P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle*, p. 115

⁵² C. Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain: au service du général de Gaulle* (Paris: Plon, 1971), pp. 118-9

⁵³ See for example J. Valette, *La France et l'Afrique: L'Afrique française du nord 1914-1962* (Paris: SEDES, 1993), pp. 175-6; S. Bernstein & P. Milza, *Histoire de la France au XXe siècle*, vol. 3, 1945-1958 (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), pp. 252-4; M. Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: The Domestic Consequences of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 88. Valette is the most dismissive of Fouchet's contribution to reform, claiming that he was not informed of Mendès-France's trip to Tunisia until the last minute, was only included in the government to secure Gaullist support for Mendès-France's investiture, was restricted to jobs without political responsibility (notably covering for the 'excesses' of Boyer de Latour), and knew nothing of Tunisian affairs. Bernstein and Milza claim that Fouchet's role in government was simply to provide reassurance to conservatives. Kahler is perhaps the most accurate, although he too fails to consider the possibility that Fouchet's participation in government was evidence of changing Gaullist attitudes; he states that the Gaullists in the Mendès-France government 'used their power to slow the pace of change in North Africa', while acknowledging that the Gaullists as a whole differed among themselves in the extent of their support for the government. Kahler is also the only historian to refer to the possibility that Fouchet may have offered to resign in response to the pace of reform proposed by Mendès-France; another account of this unclear episode states that Fouchet was able to secure Mendès-France's acceptance of a less radical, more 'Gaullist' plan for Morocco and Tunisia. Fouchet's memoirs are inconclusive on the subject.

in Gaullist thinking on the *Union française* and demonstrated the effect of events in Indochina. The fact that plans proposed by Catroux one year earlier and rejected as excessively liberal were implemented by a government supported by the majority of Gaullists in 1954 is evidence of this evolution.

Dien Bien Phu, North Africa and new hope for a Gaullist revival

The fall of Dien Bien Phu represented a turning point in the history of Fourth Republic Gaullism not only through its role in focusing attention on North Africa, but also because it gave rise to hopes that the final crisis of the discredited regime might be approaching. Indeed, throughout the period from May 1954 to May 1958, the name of Dien Bien Phu was frequently used by Gaullists to signify a humiliating defeat in the face of world opinion or a moment of crisis for the government in France.⁵⁴ The various plots and schemes proposed to bring about de Gaulle's return to power can be traced to Gaullist reactions to Dien Bien Phu. While the present study is concerned with Gaullist views on North Africa, the idea that a crisis to bring down the regime would arise from North Africa became so important to Gaullist thinking on Algerian affairs towards the end of the Fourth Republic, that an analysis of the Gaullists' tactics in engineering such a crisis demands at least a brief treatment of the hopes for change awakened by defeat in Indochina in 1954.

The fact that the defeat in Indochina was able to have a significant effect on Gaullist strategy owed much to the demise of the RPF in 1953. Although the Gaullists in parliament had passed smoothly into new formations – the *Union des Républicains d'Action Sociale* (URAS) then the *Républicains Sociaux* (RS) – the RS did not attract all former RPF members in the country as a whole. Therefore, many Gaullist supporters preferred to remain within the RPF, despite the latter's strictly non-

⁵⁴ This was especially true in 1957-58, when fears of internationalisation of the Algerian War prompted Gaullists to rally round the cry of 'no diplomatic Dien Bien Phu'.

parliamentary character as laid down by de Gaulle.⁵⁵ The new RS failed to attract the support of every former RPF federation, and those Gaullists who did not join the new movement tended to be those with a strong personal attachment to de Gaulle and a strong hostility to the 'system'.⁵⁶ The tendency towards direct, non-parliamentary action, which had always been an important element in Gaullism, gathered strength after the end of the parliamentary RPF, with the RS seen as too willing to participate in the system and the remaining RPF organisation therefore providing a focus for those opposed to this strategy. The divorce between the parliamentary Gaullists in the RS and the general body of RPF sympathisers was further emphasised by de Gaulle's lack of interest in the parliamentary or ministerial activities of RS deputies, as has already been seen in the case of Fouchet's appointment as Minister.⁵⁷ It must be noted, however, that the common impression of the parliamentary Gaullists as in some way deviating from the ideals of the General and of the RPF is not entirely accurate; since 1952, the idea that Gaullists could enter the regime in order to undermine it had been gathering support. This 'Trojan horse' theory was first outlined by René Capitant at the November 1952 RPF *Assises*,⁵⁸ and envisaged an overthrow of the regime by the Gaullists in government, in conjunction with 'la grande poussée démocratique que nous aurons pour mission essentielle de provoquer de l'extérieur'.⁵⁹ While there is no evidence that the Gaullists who entered Mendès-

⁵⁵ In his press conference of April 7, 1954, de Gaulle stressed that the RPF was now no more than an organisation composed of his supporters, undertaking no political action in the name of the *Rassemblement*. De Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, vol. 2, p. 617

⁵⁶ On the RS' failure to attract RPF members, see H.J. Tümmers, *Das 'Centre National des Républicains Sociaux', Eine Gaullistische Partei unter der IV. Republik*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universität Augsburg, 1980), p. 106; J. Dauer & M. Rodet, *Le 13 mai sans complots* (Paris: La Pensée Moderne, 1959), pp. 19-21

⁵⁷ De Gaulle made clear his indifference to the activities of Gaullists in parliaments in his declaration reacting to the investiture of Mendès-France with Gaullist support: 'Quelles que puissent être les intentions des hommes, l'actuel régime ne saurait produire qu'illusions et velléités. Je demande aux Français de croire que, ni directement, ni par personnes interposées, je ne prends aucune part à aucune de ses combinaisons'. De Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, vol. 2, p. 619 (Declaration, 22.6.1954) De Gaulle's reaction to Koenig's request for approval of his ministerial appointment displays similar indifference to Gaullist participation in government: 'Je ne vous demande pas de ne pas être ministre, mais je ne vous demande pas de l'être'. Quoted in Charlot, *Le Gaullisme d'opposition*, p. 309

⁵⁸ M-F Chevrillon, *Les Républicains Sociaux ou la traversée du désert: 1953-1958*, (unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1965), p. 7

⁵⁹ *Combat*, 11.10.1952, quoted in Chevrillon, *Les Républicains Sociaux*, p. 7

France's government in 1954 did so with this in mind, one can identify, in both the parliamentary and non-parliamentary fields, a growing militancy among Gaullists. From 1954 until 1958, the question of Gaullists undermining the regime from within was always an important focus for debate within the movement. The spirit of *salut public* prevailing after the fall of Dien Bien Phu encouraged those Gaullists who were inclined to participate in government that their presence in positions of influence might be of use in generating a national *redressement* in the case of a further crisis – which was likely to arise over North Africa.⁶⁰

The defeat in Indochina occurred in a climate of increasing Gaullist activism in opposition to the regime. Much of this was orchestrated by Jacques Dauer's young Gaullist organisations, who were already beginning to see a link between colonial crises and the downfall of the regime itself. The opportunity to create a new, Gaullist system based on a colonial emergency was certainly in the minds of Gaullists before May 1954. Writing in *Paris-Jeunes*, Pierre Lefranc developed the theme of a combination of the army and a mass movement of young people proving to be at once the saviour of the *Union française* and of France itself.⁶¹ By April 1954, after weeks of warnings about France's decline, Dauer's *La Voix de la France* seized upon de Gaulle's press conference of April 7 to state for the first time the link between disaster in Indochina, de Gaulle's return and the overthrow of the regime.⁶² Indeed, de Gaulle's press conference was widely seen as a rallying call to Gaullists and others opposed to the regime, with his public support for Marshal Juin, recently disciplined for criticising the EDC treaty, and his call for a mass show of support at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris for the commemoration of the victory of 1945:

Je demande au peuple d'être là pour marquer qu'il se souvient de ce qui fut fait pour sauver l'indépendance de la France et qu'il entend la garder. Je

⁶⁰ An example of the atmosphere of crisis created by Gaullists in May and June 1954 can be seen in Diomède Catroux's statement that: 'Nous jouons notre sort en Asie, en Afrique, en Europe. Nous connaissons l'enjeu: il s'appelle la France'. *AN*, 12.6.1954, *JORF*

⁶¹ P. Lefranc in *Paris Jeunes*, 22 (15.2.1954)

⁶² *La Voix de la France*, 3 (March-April 1954)

demande aux anciens combattants des deux guerres et d'Indochine d'entourer le monument. La garnison de Paris fera le nécessaire pour les honneurs et les sonneries. La glorieuse police de Paris assurera le service d'ordre, les accès, la circulation. Tous, tant que nous sommes, qui nous trouverons présents, ne dirons pas un seul mot, ne pousserons pas un seul cri. Au-dessus du recueillement de cet immense silence planera l'âme de la patrie.⁶³

By the time of the ceremony on May 9, the fall of Dien Bien Phu had added extra urgency and significance to de Gaulle's appeal, with the link between humiliation in the colonies and a decisive rallying around de Gaulle now clearly being made by Gaullist activists.

The demonstration of May 1954 has been interpreted, since May 1958, as a forerunner of the return of de Gaulle and the end of the Fourth Republic. Its importance to the Gaullists was twofold: it demonstrated both that a mass rally around de Gaulle could capture the imagination of activists and, crucially, military figures, and that the defeat in Indochina did not constitute a sufficiently serious crisis, in the eyes of the general population, to warrant direct action to overthrow the regime.⁶⁴ As is the case for May 1958, many of the available accounts of May 1954 are unreliable and tend to focus on the existence of various conspiracies. The most recent work on the subject has emphasised the role of prominent Gaullists such as Pierre Lefranc and Gaston Palewski in planning to descend on the Champs Élysées with de Gaulle's car, accompanied by the crowd of supporters, and force the government to resign.⁶⁵ While Palewski and Lefranc quickly realised that public support was insufficient,⁶⁶ the episode nevertheless represents a key moment in

⁶³ De Gaulle, *Discours et messages*, vol. 2, pp. 617-8

⁶⁴ C.R. Ageron has demonstrated that public opinion did not see the war in Indochina as a particularly high priority and that a majority supported negotiation or withdrawal even before Dien Bien Phu. See C.R. Ageron, 'L'Opinion publique face aux problèmes de l'Union française', in Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent, *Les chemins de la décolonisation de l'empire français 1936-1956* (Paris: CNRS, 1986), pp. 33-48; C.R. Ageron & C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Histoire de la France coloniale*, vol. 3: *Le déclin* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991), pp. 237-44.

⁶⁵ C. Nick, *Résurrection: Naissance de la IV^e République, un coup d'état démocratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), pp. 9-38

⁶⁶ The reasons for the failure of the demonstration of May 1954 are chiefly a lack of public interest in Indochina and insufficient commitment on the part of activists and military supporters. Juin, for

Fourth Republic Gaullism, as the first time that a seizure of power based on colonial problems rather than domestic disturbances such as strikes, or international factors such as the danger of war, was seriously contemplated. Despite the failure of this demonstration, Soustelle remained convinced that the regime's final crisis was approaching, making allusion to similar cataclysmic events in France's past:

Nous sommes amenés à nous dire que lorsqu'un régime a connu sa guerre du Mexique, il n'est peut-être pas loin de Sedan, et nous en sommes à nous demander combien de temps il nous reste avant le Sedan que semblent préparer les événements d'Extrême-Orient.⁶⁷

The second important lesson of May 1954 concerned the potential for co-operation between the Gaullists and the military. The existing links between Gaullists and *anciens combattants* were reinforced by the involvement of both groups in the preparation of the demonstration of May 1954. In parliament, the Gaullist deputy Edmond Michelet took up the cause of the disillusioned Indochina veterans, challenging Koenig, as Minister of Defence, over the government's delay in according them official war veterans' status.⁶⁸ Koenig's response to this criticism was markedly quicker and more compliant than most ministries' response to criticism in parliament.⁶⁹ In a significant development of his defence of *anciens d'Indochine*, Michelet went on to warn of the consequences of disillusionment

example, was approached by representatives of the *anciens d'Indochine* to act as a figurehead of the revolt that would bring de Gaulle to power, but considered the risks too great and the enterprise too likely to fail. See Nick, *Résurrection*, pp. 21-6; J.R. Tournoux, *L'Histoire secrète: La Cagoule; Le Front Populaire; Vichy; Londres; Deuxième Bureau; L'Algérie française; OAS* (Paris: Plon, 1962), pp. 252-6. It might also be noted that, whereas the RPF had always attracted some popular support among those, somewhat disenfranchised in the immediate post-war period, who would normally be considered as on the extreme right, by 1953-4 the far right was better organised and had reclaimed some of the Gaullists' militant nationalist support, particularly among young people. The number of true 'Gaullists', by 1954, prepared to overthrow the Republic in the name of national *redressement* may, therefore, have been considerably lower than activists imagined. See O. Dard, 'Jalons pour une histoire des étudiants nationalistes sous la IV^e République', *Historiens et Géographes*, 358 (1997), pp. 249-62.

⁶⁷ Soustelle, *AN*, 9.6.1954, *JORF*

⁶⁸ Michelet, *CR*, 27.7.1954, *JORF*

⁶⁹ Koenig, *CR*, 27.7.1954, *JORF*. Philippe Vial has argued that Koenig, especially during his second term as Minister of Defence, was considered by colleagues to be too close to the army and too concerned with its morale when making decisions. P. Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal', p. 268

among veterans: 'Vous savez, par expérience historique, jusqu'où peut mener le mécontentement légitime de ceux qu'on a appelés dans le passé les 'demi-solde'...''.⁷⁰ In North Africa too, Gaullists attempted to maintain relations with both veterans' groups and metropolitan Gaullism. In Morocco, the *Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants* – a key participant in the protests in Paris – displayed its interest in continuing to support Gaullism by threatening to break links with the RPF unless the Gaullists disowned a former leader now active in the counter-terrorist group *Présence Française*.⁷¹ This apparent departure from Moroccan veterans' attacks on the Gaullists for being too liberal and too conciliatory towards the regime might be seen as an indication that the new vigour associated with Gaullism after Dien Bien Phu was proving popular in certain potentially useful circles. Veterans' support for Gaullism, however, could be said to have more to do with opposition to the regime than shared opinions; the *Lettre à l'Union Française* noted with concern that the veterans of the Italian campaign of 1943-4 were now distributing tracts condemning the government's liberal policy in Morocco, even though the Gaullists had expressed support for such a policy.⁷²

That the events of May 1954 did not lead to a more sustained Gaullist assault on the regime might be explained by the Gaullists' willingness to entertain hopes of Mendès-France himself bringing about the desired change. In this respect, the disappointment felt, in February 1955, once Mendès-France suffered the same fate as other Fourth Republic Prime Ministers contributed to the Gaullists' conviction that nothing but a colonial crisis would be capable of providing the decisive moment of *salut public* or *redressement*. Mendès-France's success in addressing the key issues preoccupying the Gaullists – Indochina, the EDC, Morocco and Tunisia, the usual government *immobilisme* – meant that in the summer of 1954 Michel Debré felt the

⁷⁰ Michelet, *CR*, 27.7.1954, *JORF*

⁷¹ RPF archives, Maroc, 51/1, 'Note sur la situation du Rassemblement au Maroc'

⁷² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 238 (17.6.1954)

chances of de Gaulle's return were now smaller.⁷³ De Gaulle himself appears to have entertained little hope of a return at this time, concentrating on writing his war memoirs.⁷⁴ According to Louis Terrenoire, Gaullist hopes of a decisive change in the immediate future were so slight that de Gaulle envisaged a joint Gaullist-Mendès-France government after the 1956 elections.⁷⁵ Gaullist optimism that Mendès-France would permit recovery allowed de Gaulle to write, in October 1954, that: 'Il me semble, cependant, qu'un souffle de redressement, quoique extrêmement timide et léger, commence à rider parfois l'eau dormante qu'est notre pays'.⁷⁶ During the Mendès-France government, therefore, the Gaullists attempted a period of participation in government, admired the government's dynamism and willingness to address the problems of North Africa, and saw hope that the errors of Indochina would not be repeated. However, once the governments that succeeded Mendès-France encountered problems in Morocco and Tunisia, and the war in Algeria posed questions that demonstrated the weakness of the regime, the Gaullists were able to apply both their conclusions on colonial affairs learnt from Indochina, and their views on the link between colonial crisis and change of regime.

⁷³ Debré, *Trois Républiques pour une France*, vol. 2, p. 264

⁷⁴ The *Mémoires de Guerre* were, of course, a means of keeping hopes of an eventual Gaullist triumph alive.

⁷⁵ L. Terrenoire, *De Gaulle 1947-1954*, p. 303

⁷⁶ De Gaulle, *Lettres, notes et carnets*, vol. 7: 1951-58 (Paris: Plon, 1984-85), 12.10.1954: De Gaulle to Lt. De Gaulle

CHAPTER 6

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE FOR MOROCCO AND TUNISIA: AUGUST 1954 – FEBRUARY 1956

Less than two years after Fouchet and Mendès-France's announcement of *autonomie interne*, Morocco and Tunisia gained full independence, in March 1956. This period also saw the beginning of war in Algeria, which made the situation in the protectorates appear more urgent, international involvement in the crisis in French North Africa, and discord within Gaullism as the Gaullists struggled to keep pace with developments in the region. This chapter will look first at Gaullist reactions to the rapid evolution of Morocco and Tunisia towards independence, with particular emphasis on the dynastic question in Morocco. In this respect, the views of Gaullists in official positions, in parliament, and in settler and military organisations will be examined in an attempt to identify whether it is possible to speak of a coherent Gaullist response to the problems in the Protectorates. Secondly, the Gaullists' growing interest in the international context of the Moroccan and Tunisian problems will be traced, demonstrating that from 1955, both the internationalisation of the nationalist campaigns and the relationship between French North Africa and the international community came to occupy a prominent place in Gaullist thoughts. By 1956, the Gaullists had realised that France's international prestige was now at stake, and that any solution to the problems in North Africa would have to be developed with one eye on the international consequences of and reaction to French attempts to restore order or initiate reform. Although this chapter will deal with both Morocco and Tunisia, the situation in Morocco will be examined in greater detail, as this was the area in which Gaullists were more closely involved, and which revealed more clearly the emerging splits in the Gaullist movements.

The Fouchet period: Gaullism in government?

As was suggested in the previous chapter, the Gaullists were far from united in their responses to the Mendès-France experiment in North Africa, though the sense of urgency created by Dien Bien Phu, and their admiration for Mendès-France, frequently led to an attitude of indulgence towards the government. By February 1955, however, once the Mendès-France government had fallen, France no longer appeared in control of the process of change in the protectorates, the nationalists had not all been appeased and calmed as had been hoped, and many Gaullists became more critical of the liberal policies being pursued in North Africa. Dissent with Mendès-France and Fouchet's policy towards the protectorates had begun as early as August 1954, as terrorist violence in Morocco and Tunisia, and continued demands on the part of the *Istiqlal* and *Néo-Destour* independence parties demonstrated that the promise of internal autonomy alone had not appeased the nationalists. On August 26 and 27, 1954, the problems in the protectorates were the subject of a prolonged and very detailed debate in the National Assembly, with Mendès-France and Fouchet called to account for the government's new liberalism in North Africa. The contributions of Gaullists to this debate provide one of the clearest examples in the whole of Fourth Republic Gaullism of both the range of different aspects of the Gaullist worldview that were challenged by events in North Africa, and the divergence of views between individual Gaullists.

The debate on Tunisia and Morocco is all the more interesting for the study of Gaullism in that it presented, for the first time, the spectacle of a Gaullist minister facing criticism of his policies from within his own party. Much of this criticism focused on the question of whether Morocco and Tunisia could be considered ready for the steps towards nationhood that Fouchet and Mendès-France had proposed. This raised familiar themes of French colonial discourse such as the alleged Arab-Berber divide, the role of the sovereign in each of the protectorates, and the political 'maturity' of the Moroccan and Tunisian people. The principal issue of contention

for the Gaullists was, in the case of Tunisia, the proposed Franco-Tunisian conventions that laid the basis of Tunisian self-government and, for Morocco, the problem posed by the dynastic question. Both of these issues will be the subject of closer examination in this chapter.

For Fouchet, the chief benefit of the government's policy was that it had finally acknowledged and responded to the peoples' aspirations to some form of self-government.¹ Many other Gaullists, whose chief concern was that the government had not fully considered the consequences of its policies, did not share this view. General de Monsabert accused Fouchet of forgetting his own earlier assessment of the danger that the Tunisian *Néo-Destour* posed.² In 1952 Fouchet had compared the Tunisian nationalist movement to the totalitarian regimes of 1930s and 40s Europe, as seen in chapter 3, and de Monsabert insisted that little had changed in this respect by 1954:

Si nous n'y prenons garde, si notre prestige ne reste pas assuré, si nos précautions de présence ont quelques lacunes, si nous ne gardons pas étroitement le maintien de l'ordre, le Destour, parti totalitaire à la mode fasciste et hitlérienne – je cite toujours notre ministre des affaires marocaines et tunisiennes – fera, soyez-en sûrs, les élections sous la menace des mitraillettes et établira sa dictature.³

De Monsabert's comments demonstrated that the Gaullists would not spare the government criticism on the grounds of Fouchet's participation in it, and that Fouchet was considered to have compromised his earlier opposition to dealings with the *Néo-Destour*. While Gaullist thinking on the need for reform and dialogue in North Africa had certainly undergone some evolution, as has been seen, it is clear from the warm support that de Monsabert's remarks found among the RS group in parliament that the pace of change in Fouchet's own views was too fast for many

¹ Fouchet, *AN*, 10.8.1954, *JORF*

² Fouchet had, like other Gaullists, strongly condemned the *Neo-Destour* and rejected any possibility that a French government might negotiate with it at the RPF *Assises* in 1952.

³ de Monsabert, *AN*, 26.8.1947, *JORF*

Gaullists, regardless of his expertise in the Tunisian question. Gaullist thinking on the protectorates, at this stage, remained concerned with general principles rather than the elaboration of a detailed plan of action for managing reform.

When the Gaullists did attempt to address the problems in Morocco and Tunisia in some detail, they had difficulty in moving beyond the received ideas and misconceptions that had characterised much of French rule. Lyautey's ideal of protectorate was still revered as an example to follow: 'Le maréchal Lyautey est encore une des chances de la France au Maroc'.⁴ That the Gaullists, in 1954, still drew inspiration from the policies of 1912-25 revealed much about their assessment of the situation in Morocco. Racial interpretations of the problems in Morocco, which also dated to the time of the French conquest, were frequently evoked by Gaullists in an attempt to claim that the protectorate had not yet sufficiently matured to a stage where independence could be envisaged. Several contributors to parliamentary debate attempted to explain the unrest in Morocco as simply another manifestation of the conflict between the rural Berbers and the town-dwelling Arabs. General de Monsabert spoke of the situation as no more than 'l'éternel drame des deux Marocs, celui du bled et celui des villes, [qui] s'est réveillé dès que sont apparus les signes de notre faiblesse',⁵ in an attempt to demonstrate that the nationalists actually posed a threat to the integrity of Morocco by wishing to separate the two communities and that they were in fact only interested in creating an Arab state. Once the nationalists had been identified as Arabs acting against the wishes of the loyal Berbers, according to this argument, they could then be denounced as sectarian and racist.⁶ The conservative Gaullists, therefore, quickly reacted to the continuation of nationalist activity following the announcement of the government's reforms by denouncing nationalists as racist or dictatorial, thereby interpreting the Moroccan and Tunisian problems as part of a wider assault on French and Western

⁴ Debré, *CR*, 14.12.1954, *JORF*

⁵ de Monsabert, *AN*, 26.8.1954, *JORF*

⁶ Godin, *AN*, 2.2.1955, *JORF*

values. The effects of such a position can be seen in elements of Gaullist behaviour until 1958, in particular with reference to the question of torture in Algeria.

The Gaullists' responses to the Moroccan and Tunisian problems during the Mendès-France and Fouchet era and beyond were not, however, entirely negative. In August 1954, one RS deputy, Pierre Clostermann, used his group's entire allotted time for participation in parliamentary debate on North Africa to express opinions that were contrary to those held by most Gaullists. That this was possible reveals much about the state of RS party discipline and unity. Though criticised by his own colleagues, Clostermann's views may be seen as representative of an alternative strain of Gaullism, in that he, unlike most other parliamentarians, was speaking from a position of considerable first-hand experience of Morocco.⁷ Clostermann refuted the racist arguments advanced by his colleagues, insisting that the Arab-Berber or town-country divide in Morocco had never been as wide as French opinion had constantly depicted it since 1912:

On cherche à recréer artificiellement l'antagonisme de la ville et de la montagne. C'est là un de ces mythes qui finissent par se créer on ne sait comment, mais qui deviennent vérités absolues d'évangile à force d'être répétés, sans que les faits qui les ont fait naître aient jamais été contrôlés. On parle du problème berbère, du problème des villes. Oublie-t-on que Casablanca est la plus importante des villes berbères? Dans cette ville, sur huit cent mille Marocains, quatre cent mille à cinq cent mille sont berbères... n'oublions pas que la raison même du protectorat, c'était cette lutte entre la ville et la montagne. C'est à l'origine du traité de Fez. Le soin a été confié à la France de remettre de l'ordre au Maroc. Après y avoir réussi, grâce à Lyautey, aujourd'hui on va tenter de recréer artificiellement une scission entre les Berbères, gens des montagnes, et les gens des villes.⁸

Clostermann's liberal position incorporated many of the key points of 'pure' Gaullist doctrine: France's mission to bring unity and harmony to the colonies; admiration for the achievements of Lyautey; rejection of those, whether political parties or colonial

⁷ Clostermann had been sent to Morocco by the government in 1953 to report on the state of opinion in the protectorate and the dynastic question.

⁸ P. Clostermann, *AN*, 26.8.1954, *JORF*

administrators, seeking to create division rather than unity. Yet Clostermann was so untypical of the RS deputies that he was obliged to begin his speech by stating that his views were not those of most of his group, to the grateful acknowledgement of other RS members present.⁹ The crisis in Morocco and Tunisia split the Gaullists in a number of ways. While a show of unity remained possible on certain issues – notably, the international aspects of the North African question – the debates in parliament and the press between Gaullists frequently revealed a divide between those, like Fouchet, exercising official functions and others, like Dronne, claiming to represent a ‘purer’ form of Gaullism. This division was perhaps accentuated, in the case of Morocco and Tunisia, by the relatively low profile kept by the movement’s acknowledged leaders. Debré, Soustelle, Chaban-Delmas and de Gaulle himself took little part in the Gaullists’ debate on the protectorates. Debré and Soustelle were at the time preoccupied with European affairs and Algeria respectively. As a result, the Gaullists did not have the possibility of falling into line behind one of the movement’s acknowledged intellectual leaders, as they had done over EDC, for example. The divisions that thus surfaced continued throughout the early stages of the Algerian war, once the crisis in the protectorates had illustrated the diversity of colonial opinion within Gaullism.

Examples of the emerging split between Gaullists in government and ordinary members can be found throughout 1954-55. As early as August 1954, Raymond Dronne proposed an amendment to a parliamentary motion supporting Fouchet’s Morocco and Tunisia policy. Dronne’s amendment, voicing the concerns of those Gaullists not totally supportive of Fouchet, was based on three points: concern that the work of constructing a true *Union française* must not be forgotten; the need to create a true Franco-Muslim community rather than treating the French population in

⁹ Notable for their criticism of Clostermann were the RS deputies Joseph Halleguen – who expressed relief that Clostermann’s views were not those of all Gaullists – and Pierre de Bénouville, who accused Clostermann of being mistaken and ‘putting France on trial’. Halleguen, *AN*, 26.8.1954, *JORF*

the protectorates as a foreign community; and the government's policy of negotiating with nationalists rather than directly addressing the supposedly pro-French populations.¹⁰ All of these points reflect orthodox Gaullist colonial thinking, showing very little change from the general principles enshrined in the limited reforms of the post-war period. If Fouchet represented a strain of Gaullism that was evolving in response to events in the colonies, Dronne marked himself out as the voice of those who continued to believe that de Gaulle's reforms and the concept of the *Union française* would be sufficient to end the unrest in North Africa. Voting on the government's policy effectively split Gaullists into conservative and liberal groups: prominent among those supporting the government were Chaban-Delmas, Catroux, Clostermann and Soustelle, while Dronne, de Bénouville and Billotte opposed Fouchet's policy.¹¹

In 1954-5, the divergence of views among Gaullists over the internal autonomy proposals for the protectorates was further complicated by the dynastic question in Morocco. The chief obstacle to resolution of the crisis in Morocco was the question of the Sultan. Since Mohammed V had been deposed by the French authorities in 1953, supposedly in response to pressure from the Pacha of Marrakech, El Glaoui, his successor, ben Arafa, had failed to win the allegiance of the Moroccan people. Although not mentioned as a priority in Mendès-France and Fouchet's declarations of July 1954, the dynastic problem quickly came to dominate and obstruct any attempts at dialogue between the French authorities and the nationalists. By 1955, it had become clear that ben Arafa would also have to be replaced, in order to re-open dialogue with the moderate nationalists and prevent further polarisation. This raised the question of whether France should simply restore Mohammed V, now exiled to Madagascar, or devise an alternative solution to the problem of ensuring a reasonably compliant and co-operative figurehead for the Moroccan people. Gaullists played a

¹⁰ Dronne, *AN*, 27.8.1954, *JORF*

¹¹ Dronne, de Bénouville, Billotte, *AN*, 27.8.1954, *JORF*

significant role in the debate over the Sultan, chiefly through Gilbert Grandval's brief spell as Resident-General, Georges Catroux's appointment as government representative in negotiations with the former Sultan, and Pierre July's role as Minister for Tunisian and Moroccan affairs during 1955.¹²

The first Gaullist to have to deal with the consequences of Mohammed V's exile was Christian Fouchet, in 1954. Since the Sultan's removal in 1953 – which had not been unreservedly welcomed by Gaullists – most Gaullists had nonetheless opposed his return, fearing that it would give excessive encouragement to the nationalists following the internal autonomy plan. Indeed, only Pierre Clostermann had actually shown support publicly for Mohammed V, having intervened unsuccessfully to prevent his removal in 1953.¹³ Fouchet, however, soon realised that the existence of a Sultan-in-exile was one of the major obstacles to the Moroccan nationalists' acceptance of French good intentions and negotiations. As early as July 1954, he had reached the conclusion that the most effective way of making progress in Morocco would be to end the ex-Sultan's exile, on condition that he renounce political activity; his transfer from Madagascar to France was seriously envisaged.¹⁴ In response, however, the Resident-General, François Lacoste, displayed the same attitudes that had led to Mohammed V's exile, ordering that all campaigning against Ben Arafat be stopped.¹⁵ Fouchet thus entered into conflict, from the early stages of his ministry, with the coalition of colonial administrators, settlers and tribal chiefs

¹² July, although a member of the ARS group in the *AN* and therefore technically a Gaullist, was not involved in any of the non-parliamentary Gaullist movements or activities, and appears to have had no particular contact with de Gaulle or any of the Gaullist *notables* outside his parliamentary activities. He therefore represents the so-called *Gaullistes de combinaison*, participating in parliamentary life as a member of a Gaullist party but, unusually, otherwise displaying little interest in the idea of Gaullism as a force greater than and existing independently of normal political activity.

¹³ S. Bernard, *Le Conflit franco-marocain 1943-1956* (3 vols.) (Brussels: Editions de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 201-3

¹⁴ *Documents Diplomatiques Français* (Paris: Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques/ Imprimerie Nationale, 1959-) (henceforth *DDF*), Note du Ministère des Affaires Marocaines et Tunisiennes, 22.7.1954

¹⁵ *DDF*, Lacoste to Fouchet, 29.7.1954

that had generally enjoyed close links with and the support of the Gaullists both in Morocco and metropolitan France.

The prevailing view among the administration in Morocco remained that Morocco was not united – due to the supposed racial division – and that the support of the tribal chiefs in the South was so important to France that the return of Mohammed V could not be envisaged without the loss of French authority. The southern chiefs' fear of vengeance if the Sultan whose deposal they had orchestrated were to return was viewed with some trepidation. As Lacoste explained to Fouchet:

Ces chefs traditionnels, dont il nous est impossible de sous-estimer le pouvoir, *car c'est leur force, et non la nôtre*, qui tient le bled, sont en effet obsédés par la crainte d'être 'abandonnés' ou encore de se laisser dépasser par une évolution politique...¹⁶

Lacoste's opposition to reform in the name of the defence of his loyal Moroccan collaborators might be seen as a significant prelude to the debate over the treatment of loyal Algerians in the early Fifth Republic; Fouchet's response was as unsympathetic to the chiefs' predicament as de Gaulle's was to be of the *harkis*. Like de Gaulle, Fouchet won few friends among Gaullist supporters for his insistence on pursuing the dynastic issue in the face of opposition. Fouchet's determination to adopt a liberal policy in the face of the administration's conservatism persisted throughout the summer of 1954, inspired to some extent by his awareness of the need to offer some hope of progress on the dynastic question in order to avoid the danger of the anniversary of Mohammed V's deposal, on August 20, becoming a symbolic date in the nationalist cause.

The Moroccan administration and the settlers saw things differently. Lacoste reported that Fouchet's policy of reform in Tunisia risked having negative

¹⁶ DDF, Lacoste to Fouchet, 8.8.1954

consequences in Morocco by creating unrealistically high expectations among the nationalists, who were all too aware that no French government could survive the removal of Ben Arafa and Mohammed V's return to the throne. Fouchet displayed increasing frustration with such attitudes.¹⁷ His reform plan of September 20, 1954, agreed with Mendès-France and involving social and economic reform, widening of access to public office, conditional release of nationalist prisoners, establishment of joint Franco-Moroccan government departments, and the creation of a council, including nationalists, to study any kind of reform except the dynastic question,¹⁸ was received relatively quietly by the Gaullists and by metropolitan politicians in general. In Morocco, too, it failed to excite nationalists, although Lacoste and the settlers protested nevertheless. The muted reactions, however, demonstrated that both sides had realised that the kind of progress being made in Tunisia could not be seen in Morocco until the problem of the Sultan had been resolved. Once the *Istiqlal* refused to enter into negotiations without the dynastic question also being considered, the idea of a Council of the Throne, first mooted under General Guillaume's Residency (Sep. 1953 - May 1954) resurfaced as a means of breaking the constitutional deadlock. Under this scheme, representatives of both Sultans would rule, along with a third, independent, member, thus allowing Mohammed V to return from exile without humiliating the tribal chiefs, encouraging the nationalists and antagonising the settlers. However, the question of Mohammed V's abdication – always demanded by the French as a condition of his return from exile – continued to prevent a solution throughout 1954. Fouchet's role in the dynastic debate does not appear to have been determinedly that of a Gaullist in government, attempting only to ensure the implementation of the most conservative measure possible. Indeed, as his frequent exchanges with Lacoste show, Fouchet clearly had little sympathy with the conservative settler and administration viewpoints. Although the dynastic problem had not been solved by the time Mendès-France's government fell in

¹⁷ DDF, Lacoste to Fouchet, 11.11.1954. Fouchet's annotation to this document - 'Ceci est du roman' - illustrates the differences between his view of events and the Resident-General's.

¹⁸ For details of this plan, see Bernard, vol. 1, pp. 241-2

February 1955, Fouchet did not show any signs of supporting Gaullist attacks on Mohammed V. When, in August 1954, the Gaullist deputy Pierre de Bénouville launched an attack on Mohammed V for his alleged collaboration with Germany during the Second World War, Fouchet strongly rejected this assertion and rebuked his colleague for having considered it appropriate to the debate.¹⁹

Tunisia presented Fouchet with considerably fewer problems than Morocco, and inspired less division and argument among Gaullists. The process of disengagement from Tunisia was far less troublesome than in Morocco, chiefly because the situation was not complicated by confusion over which potential negotiating partners accurately represented the Tunisians. With nationalist leader Bourguiba still imprisoned in France at the time of Fouchet and Mendès-France's new course in July 1954, negotiations proceeded between the French authorities and the ministers of the Tunisian government formed in 1950, along with Ben Youssef, leader of the *Néo-Destour* in Bourguiba's absence. Fouchet's first priority was to put an end to the nationalist violence, in order that the principle of not negotiating with a movement considered as terrorist by many in France could be upheld. Fouchet's expectations of what France could hope to achieve in negotiations were lower in Tunisia than Morocco. Soon after taking up his ministerial post, he observed that France was somewhat restricted by its treaty obligation to support the Tunisian sovereign, as Moncef Bey, who had come to power in 1942, was sympathetic to nationalism. In a marked contrast to the attitude of most Gaullists concerning a very similar situation in Morocco, however, Fouchet concluded that there could be no question of altering this arrangement in any way.²⁰ Rather than removing or undermining a local leader who seemed hostile to France, therefore, Fouchet concentrated on ensuring that France retained as much influence as possible on the evolution of the Protectorate, notably by ensuring that one of the four ministries to which France was entitled in

¹⁹ AN, 27.8.1954

²⁰ DDF, Note, Ministre des Affaires Tunisiennes et Marocaines, 28.7.1954

the Tunisian government was always that of finance.²¹ Displaying characteristic Gaullist concern for the economic interests of the French settlers, Fouchet attempted to ensure that the French population would have some degree of representation in this field. He sought, however, to avoid this statement of concern for French investments being interpreted as a more general defence of the settlers' rights against those of the Tunisians. When Bourguiba complained, for example, that the settlers had been politicised excessively by extremists, Fouchet reassured him that his ministry's interest did not extend beyond economic matters to unconditional support for all settler activities.²²

The problem of settler extremism was generally acknowledged as the first obstacle to achieving a negotiated settlement in Tunisia, with the nationalist *fellaghas* refusing to disarm without some guarantee of an end to settler counter-terrorism. Despite the support the Gaullists had enjoyed among the Tunisian settlers – through Gabriel Puaux, for example, as seen in chapter 3 (pp. 71-4)²³ – Fouchet sought to avoid any displays of favouritism towards the settlers. In this aim, he encountered the resistance of the Resident-General, Boyer de Latour. Fouchet, however, in contrast to the later collusion of Koenig, Boyer and the settlers in Morocco, appeared uninterested in further cementing the evolving Gaullist-military-settler links in North Africa. Boyer received unequivocal instructions that his role was to promote détente in Tunisia, and to oversee an amnesty, in November and December 1954, during which nationalist terrorists could surrender their arms with impunity. In Tunisian political affairs, too, Fouchet kept his distance from settler politics, drafting his own policy documents, for example, rather than simply relying on the proposals prepared for him by the conservative officials of the French administration. One such case saw Fouchet reject

²¹ *ibid*

²² DDF, Note, 18.9.1954

²³ The state of Puaux's thinking on nationalism in Tunisia by 1955 is revealed by his description of Bourguiba's influential book, *La Tunisie et la France*, as the nationalist leader's *Mein Kampf*. D. Ling, *Tunisia: From Protectorate to Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 173. Similar views had been expressed by the Resident-General in Tunisia, General Boyer de Latour, in August 1954, demonstrating the closeness of some Gaullist and military views.

the administration's preferred option of the 'integration' of the French into any new Tunisian institutions; Fouchet instead proposed a 'tunisification' of the existing French administrative structures.²⁴ Fouchet was certainly aware, throughout his period of reform in Tunisia, of the need to avoid giving excessive cause for concern to his more conservative Gaullist colleagues or to the settlers – Mendès-France complained that the pace of change was too slow in the second half of 1954 – but he did succeed in bringing about calm in Tunisia and opening negotiations with the nationalists on the basis that France's essential interests in Tunisia would not be entirely neglected.²⁵ That the conservative Gaullists were not more hostile to Fouchet surely owes much to this careful approach, as well as the fact that Fouchet's progress in Tunisia meant that a Gaullist was associated with a successful and popular government policy.

Once Fouchet had secured peace in Tunisia and established a common base for negotiation with the nationalists, the settler community and conservatives in France did begin to express their displeasure at the extent of concessions that France was prepared to make. Boyer de Latour warned that France was in danger of legitimising, through the government's determination to negotiate, a terrorist movement that was increasingly international in character. In view of the resources and support being made available to the nationalists, the risk of changing the remaining *fellaghas* from a terrorist organisation to a legitimate liberation army through acknowledging their right to engage in talks was a very real one, in the view of the Tunisian administration.²⁶ This argument was taken up in subsequent years by many Gaullists in relation to the activities of guerrillas in Algeria, in another example of the transfer of ideas from the military to Gaullists in North African affairs. Indeed, while the

²⁴ J. Valette, *La France et l'Afrique: L'Afrique française du nord, 1914-1962* (Paris: SEDES, 1993), pp. 179-80

²⁵ By November 1954, Fouchet appears to have come to the conclusion that France's truly essential interests in Tunisia – to be included in any treaty as a point of principle – were defence and security. DDF, Fouchet to Boyer, 20.11.1954

²⁶ DDF, Boyer to Fouchet, 14.9.1954

final stages of Fouchet's spell in charge of Tunisian affairs, once the amnesty was in place, were relatively calm, the criticisms that continued to emanate from Tunis read like a prelude to the tone of Gaullist and military attacks on government North African policy for the period between 1954 and the end of the Fourth Republic. Signs that the government would be willing to deal with Bourguiba drew the rapid response that the nationalist leader had renounced his aim of a French-style secular state and was turning towards the East, representing both anti-Western Islam and communism.²⁷

The Faure Government: Gaullist Opposition and Division

Gaullist discontent with events in Tunisia increased after Fouchet's departure from office with the fall of the Mendès-France government in February 1955. The cause of their unhappiness, the signature of the Franco-Tunisian conventions that laid the basis for the establishment of a Tunisian state, would surely, however, have led to protests even if Fouchet had still been the minister responsible. Debré, hitherto rather reticent on North African affairs, led the Gaullist attack on these agreements, by which France recognised and proclaimed Tunisian self-government in all matters except those specified in the conventions.²⁸ As soon as the details of the proposed conventions were known, in January 1955, Debré protested that the independent Tunisian state that would be created would lead to misery, anarchy and dictatorship, all of which France had a duty to prevent. There could, he argued, be no benefit to the cause of freedom or the interests of the West arising from Tunisian independence. France, therefore, had a duty, in the name of the West and of French

²⁷ DDF, Boyer to Fouchet, 17.11.1954

²⁸ These were: protection of the personal status of French nationals in Tunisia, including the provision for dual nationality; technical co-operation between the French and Tunisian governments; the retention of French schools alongside the Tunisian government's education system; measures to promote Franco-Tunisian trade, keep Tunisia within the franc zone and safeguard French private investments. France also retained influence in defence and security affairs. The conventions were signed on June 3, 1955, and were accompanied by Bourguiba's return to Tunisia from exile in France. Ling, pp. 174-176; S. El Machat, *Tunisie: les chemins vers l'indépendance (1945-1956)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), pp. 225-8

civilisation, to prevent independence at all costs.²⁹ Tunisia's secession, Debré argued, would ruin France's position in Morocco, Algeria and the sub-Saharan colonies. He saw the best hope of avoiding this disastrous outcome in ensuring that Tunisia be brought into the *Union française*; thus, the Gaullists' fears about Mendès-France's apparent lack of interest in this constitutional framework at the time of his Carthage speech in July 1954 continued to govern their response to government policy in Tunisia. Somewhat paradoxically, however, Debré also argued that to allow a full French-style democracy in Tunisia was not necessarily the solution to the problem: the danger of false elections was a serious one, and France ought to explain to the Tunisian nationalists that an alternative form of government to an attempt to replicate western systems might be better suited to their needs. Debré, unfortunately, stopped short of outlining such an alternative in detail; one may assume that Tunisia's limited representation and partial autonomy within the *Union française* was considered to be the limit of any moves towards sovereignty.

Like the Franco-Tunisian conventions, the resolution of the dynastic problem in Morocco, and the resulting opening of meaningful negotiations, did not finally occur until after Fouchet had left office. Gaullists played a prominent part in this prelude to Moroccan independence, under new Prime Minister Edgar Faure's government, although Gaullist unity was once again a casualty of the association of RS members with a progressive colonial policy. In keeping with the absence of recognised Gaullist leaders from the debate on Morocco and Tunisia – Soustelle was now Governor General in Algeria, and the Algerian problem was becoming increasingly acute – another relatively little-known Gaullist, Gilbert Grandval, was appointed Resident-General in Morocco in June 1955. Grandval was known as a liberal Gaullist, and had never been part of the Gaullist hierarchy. Prior to his appointment to Morocco, he had been the French government's High Commissioner in the Saar, a

²⁹ Debré, 'Les Conventions Franco-Tunisiennes et l'Union Française' in *Les Idées... Les Faits*, 8 (Jan. 1955)

region in which Michel Debré had shown considerable interest early in the Fourth Republic. Although it was generally assumed in Paris that Grandval was a strong character likely to satisfy conservatives,³⁰ his appointment was not greeted with any great enthusiasm by the Gaullists, suggesting that they were, by June 1955, more concerned with the nature of the policies being pursued in Morocco than with the symbolic importance of the nomination of a Gaullist to an important position.³¹

Opposition to Grandval in Morocco was led by the settler population, many of whom maintained contacts with the metropolitan Gaullist movement despite their continuing attachment to the old RPF organisation rather than the RS' more parliamentary and conventional approach. Grandval, however, had been appointed to replace Lacoste principally because the latter had failed to control the growth of counter-terrorism among the settlers. This had reached a high point in June 1955 with the murder of the prominent liberal businessman Jacques Lemaigre-Dubreuil, an incident that shocked French opinion and made Faure determined to seek a rapid solution to the dynastic problem through the nomination of a Resident-General likely to win the support of the Moroccans.³² The Gaullists' links with settler counter-terrorism were already somewhat ambiguous, even before the deputy Raymond Triboulet openly sided with the settlers against Grandval. One of the Gaullist leaders in Morocco, Reimbold, had been in correspondence with Paris since 1953 to protest that the French community was left with no alternative to counter-terrorism in the face of apparently unpunished nationalist violence.³³ Reimbold was eventually expelled from the RPF in January 1956 by Jacques Foccart, to the anger of some Moroccan Gaullists and the relief of others, in a clear demonstration of the divisive

³⁰ Bernard, vol. 1, p. 273

³¹ The *Lettre à L'Union Française*, for example, did not claim that Grandval's appointment represented a success for Gaullism, and instead continued to call for a coherent government policy. *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 289 (23.6.1955)

³² On the settlers' violence of the summer of 1955, which led to Faure's loss of patience with Lacoste, see A. Werth, *The Strange History of Pierre Mendès-France and the Great Conflict over French North Africa* (London: Barrie, 1957), pp. 211-4

³³ RPF archives, Maroc, 51.1/2, correspondence, Reimbold to RPF headquarters, 1954-55

fallout from the dynastic question.³⁴ Foccart, indeed, was one of the few Paris-based Gaullists to tackle the question of counter-terrorism at all, writing in February that elements among the French population in Tunisia 'paraissent perdre leur sang-froid', and later criticising the excessively violent tone of the *Présence Française* movement.³⁵ Any signs of metropolitan Gaullist sympathy with Moroccan liberals drew a rapid response from the Moroccan Gaullists. In June 1955, for example, the Moroccan RPF held a special meeting in Casablanca, after which the group wrote to Olivier Guichard, de Gaulle's *chef de cabinet* and one of the most influential members of the Gaullist hierarchy, to protest at favourable treatment of the liberal *Conscience Française* movement in the Gaullist press and request permission to make statements on Moroccan policy without waiting to hear the views of the metropolitan party.³⁶

Faced with the prospect of losing influence among the European population of Morocco, Gaullists found more reason to avoid supporting further concessions. In Tunisia, the senator Antoine Colonna, a close associate of Puaux and a former RPF activist, invited a group of politicians including the Gaullists Debré and Jean Legendre to Tunisia in April 1955, with the intention of enlisting them as the metropolitan and parliamentary spokesmen of his *Rassemblement Français* settlers' movement, which was associated with counter-terrorism.³⁷ Around the same time, in

³⁴ RPF archives, Maroc, 51.6./3, correspondence, Foccart to M. Robert, 4.1.1956

³⁵ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 269 (3.2.1955); 284 (18.5.1955). The *Lettre à l'Union Française*, alone among Gaullist publications, was consistent in its criticism of counter-terrorism throughout 1955. This is all the more significant given its editor Jacques Foccart's role as co-ordinator of Gaullist activities in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the RPF was frequently and accurately accused of being the mouthpiece of the most conservative elements of the French population.

³⁶ RPF archives, Maroc, 51.1/3, Richard (Groupe RPF, Casablanca) to Guichard, 19.6.1955. An indication of the division within Gaullism in Morocco at this point is that Pierre Clostermann was the victim of a counter-terrorist attack for being a member of the *Conscience Française* that the Moroccan RPF were so hostile to. *DDF*, 1.5.1955, Note du Secrétaire Général Politique de la Résidence Générale de France à Tunis.

³⁷ *DDF*, 1.5.1955, Note du Secrétaire Général Politique de la Résidence Générale de France à Tunis. This was a direct reaction to the signature of the Franco-Tunisian *protocole d'accord*, a prelude to the Franco-Tunisian conventions. Puaux, also involved in this episode, compared the Conventions to France's loss of Canada in 1759, an analogy that was to be repeated several times by Gaullists, especially Debré, during the *Algérie française* campaign (see pp. 253-4).

France, Gaullist deputies such as Triboulet took up the settlers' cause, criticising Grandval for failing to show sufficient sympathy for their problems. In June 1955, Triboulet emerged as the leader of a tendency within the RS that put defence of French interests in Morocco before support for the policies of the Gaullist Resident-General.

Triboulet's public dispute with Grandval, illustrating the extent of the split in Gaullist ranks, owed much to the fact that he was Minister for *Anciens Combattants* in Faure's government. In this capacity, he sought to ensure favourable treatment for veterans among the settler communities in North Africa,³⁸ thereby identifying himself with some of the most conservative elements of the French population – a high percentage of North African Gaullists were former soldiers – at the same time as Grandval was earning a reputation as 'Resident-General of the Moroccans'³⁹ and suffering fierce attacks from the Europeans on the basis of his resistance background and Jewish-German origins.⁴⁰ In July 1955, Triboulet wrote to Grandval, telling him that 'Il est absolument impensable qu'un représentant de la France en Afrique du Nord puisse mener une politique quelconque contre la volonté des Français installés là-bas'.⁴¹ Triboulet went on to attack Grandval in the press,⁴² accusing him of acting rashly and failing to realise the importance of maintaining links between the French and Muslim communities – links that Triboulet envisaged being kept alive by veterans' associations, which were surely by this stage seen as the voice of the conservative settlers. Indeed, September 1955 witnessed the first metropolitan demonstration against the government's North African policy, organised in the name of the RPF and intended specifically for *anciens combattants*. The participants were

³⁸ Triboulet's policy in this area satisfied the demands of the more vocal Gaullist settlers, as represented by Reimbold, who had been calling for government to give 'loyal' Moroccans and settlers roles in Moroccan administration, with a prominent place being reserved for war veterans. RPF archives, Maroc, 51.1/3, February 1954, Groupe RPF de Casablanca, *Bulletin marocain de liaison*, No. 8

³⁹ Werth, p. 217

⁴⁰ Werth, p. 213

⁴¹ R. Triboulet, *Un Gaulliste de la IV^e* (Paris: Plon, 1985), p. 234

⁴² Triboulet, *Un Gaulliste de la IV^e*, p. 238

mostly Indochina veterans, as in May 1954, and their calls for Faure's resignation were accompanied by others of 'De Gaulle au pouvoir'. While little was achieved, the episode showed the place occupied by veterans in Gaullist activism, and can be seen as a precursor of the *Algérie française* demonstrations of the later Fourth Republic.⁴³ When the conservative General Boyer de Latour replaced Grandval, Triboulet reassured the Moroccan veterans' associations that their situation would now improve. Thus, one Gaullist's metropolitan ministerial activities rapidly came into conflict with another's attempt to pursue reform in North Africa.

Grandval's actual policies in Morocco gave the metropolitan Gaullists much to disagree with, particularly concerning the dynastic question. Although he was determined, upon appointment, to avoid the return of Mohammed V, his first report from Morocco to the government in Paris stressed the absolute need to achieve some change in the way in which the protectorate was ruled, suggesting that a return to the true spirit of protectorate was necessary.⁴⁴ Grandval thus immediately identified with the liberal argument of colleagues such as Catroux, looking to Lyautey as his inspiration. Further parallels with Lyautey can be seen in his determination to challenge the excesses and privileges of the French population: 'Il existe ... à Casablanca une majorité française fermement opposée à toute politique évolutive et n'admettant qu'une politique de force. Il faudra, le moment venu, faire en sorte que cette population ne contrecarre pas la politique gouvernementale'.⁴⁵ Grandval clearly saw himself as the representative of liberalism in Morocco, even when many of his Gaullist colleagues were denouncing the liberal position in parliament; indeed, there is general agreement that Grandval's ultimate failure to bring about effective reform in Morocco was due to the number of enemies he made during his short period in office.⁴⁶ In this respect, his behaviour displayed, in many ways, the opposite of what

⁴³ D. Tartakowsky, *Les manifestations de rue en France 1918-1968* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997), p. 638

⁴⁴ DDF, Grandval to July, 12.7.1955

⁴⁵ DDF, Grandval to July, 19.7.1955

⁴⁶ Werth, pp. 209-27; Bernard, vol. 1, pp. 273-315

one might expect of a Gaullist Resident-General; he rebuked the military Commander in Morocco, General Duval, for having told Defence Minister Koenig that the nationalists were fanatics who needed to be defeated completely by military action.⁴⁷

The notion of tribal and racial divisions that had been evoked by Gaullists in parliament, and which had allowed El Glaoui to collaborate with the French to undermine Mohammed V and the nationalists, also fell victim to Grandval's reforming drive, as he found the Pacha of Marrakech not a useful ally but, instead, stubborn and an obstacle to progress.⁴⁸ Grandval rejected the conventional view that the South of the country was securely held by loyal local chiefs. He criticised the officials for their complacency in failing to appreciate that the supposedly loyal Berbers were now also supportive of Mohammed V, taking this as conclusive evidence that calm would not be restored to Morocco until the government allowed the deposed Sultan to return. Such a determination to overturn the received ideas that had lasted throughout the period of protectorate lost Grandval the support of most of the Gaullists, although July remained generally supportive, and Catroux was a valuable ally to Grandval through his acceptance of the task of negotiating the Sultan's return. It has also been suggested that Grandval enjoyed the support of de Gaulle, though de Gaulle's only direct advice to Grandval appears to have been that the situation in Morocco could only be resolved by Mohammed V's return, which the present government would not be able to enforce.⁴⁹ Bernard, indeed, argues that

⁴⁷ DDF, Duval to Koenig, 22.7.1955; Grandval to July, 24.7.1955

⁴⁸ DDF, Grandval to July, 2.8.1955

⁴⁹ Bernard, vol. 1, pp. 313-4. Further evidence for the supposed close relationship between Grandval and de Gaulle is hard to find; de Gaulle's published correspondence does not include any prolonged or detailed exchange with Grandval, while Grandval does not appear to have been in regular contact with the General during his period in Morocco. De Gaulle's only public statement on Morocco in this period predates Grandval's appointment by only a week, and might therefore be assumed to have been influential, though it adds little to his previous statements on North Africa, speaking of federal association between France, Morocco and Tunisia within the *Union française* concept as outlined at Brazzaville. De Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, vol. 2: *dans l'attente 1946-1958* (Paris: Plon, 1970), pp. 637-9 (Press Conference, 30.6.1955). Foccart adds that de Gaulle told him in August 1955 that the return of Mohammed V was inevitable and it would therefore be in France's interest to propose it rather than witness the inevitable happen in the face of its protests. There is no evidence, however,

Grandval's close connections to the General mattered more to Edgar Faure than the fact that he was a member of the supposedly conservative parliamentary RS group.⁵⁰ His role in government, therefore, would appear not to be merely to appease conservatives, as had been suggested in relation to Fouchet in the Mendès-France government, but rather to proceed with reform from a position of authority and determination.

Grandval's chief achievement before his resignation in frustration at the failure of Paris to share his urgency and defend him when he antagonised virtually all the settlers, military and administration in Morocco, was to devise a plan for Mohammed V's return from exile. The government's acceptance of this plan and its implications caused a further display of division among the Gaullists. Georges Catroux was sent to Madagascar to secure Mohammed V's acceptance of a *Conseil du trône*, which would appoint a Moroccan government, thus avoiding the direct restoration of the former Sultan and a humiliating defeat for the government. After negotiations, Catroux eventually proposed a more liberal regime than even that which had been proposed under successive governments' *autonomie interne* plans, the final formula proposing merely a Moroccan government 'uni à la France par des liens permanents d'une interdépendance librement consentie'.⁵¹ Catroux had therefore considerably surpassed the liberalism initially envisaged by both the government and the Gaullists, although he did display some characteristically Gaullist reservations as to the effect that this solution would have on the concept of the *Union française*. With Mohammed V reluctant to agree to the formula of 'association des états par des institutions communes de type fédéral', because it seemed too close to the *Union française*, of which Morocco was not part, Catroux defended the use of such terms in

that de Gaulle or Foccart shared this opinion with any other Gaullists, and de Gaulle certainly never expressed it publicly. P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle: entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard* (Paris: Fayard/Jeune Afrique, 1995), pp. 116-17

⁵⁰ Bernard, vol. 1, p. 273

⁵¹ DDF, Soucadaux (Haut Commissaire de la France à Madagascar) to Teitgen (Ministre de la France d'Outre-mer) – reporting on the Catroux-Mohammed V negotiations, 8.9.1955

the final government declaration, arguing that to present the settlement as part of a federal structure would avoid French opinion concluding that outright independence was imminent, and would not in any case discourage the Moroccan nationalists.⁵² As was the case with Fouchet's declarations of 1954, the concept of *Union française* as defined in 1944-46 remained important for Gaullists, even when implementing liberal colonial policy.

While Gaullists such as Grandval, July and Catroux were willing to compromise their purely 'Gaullist' view of colonial reform, to some extent, in the name of finding a solution to the problems in Morocco, most *Républicains Sociaux* proved more dogmatic. As early as July 1955, the parliamentary RS group resolved not to accept the return of Mohammed V; with five ministers in government,⁵³ they might well have expected this to become an issue on which they could force concessions through the threat of bringing down Faure's administration. Koenig made the most concerted attempt to water down Grandval's liberal policy, urging him to appoint the ineffective General Leblanc as his director of Interior Affairs in Morocco.⁵⁴ Koenig's Chief of Staff was Colonel Lecomte, who had previously been involved in the implementation of legislation designed to create separate status for Berbers and Arabs; through him, Koenig undermined Grandval's policies in Morocco.⁵⁵ At the same time, in Paris, Koenig led the opposition within the government to Grandval's plan for a solution to the dynastic problem.⁵⁶ Frustration grew between Grandval and Koenig, especially when Koenig told Grandval, supposedly on behalf of the government, that the deadline of August 20 for acceptance of the Resident-General's

⁵² DDF, Soucadaux to Teitgen, 9.9.1955

⁵³ These were Koenig (Défense nationale), G. Palewski (Ministre délégué à la présidence du conseil), Bayrou (Secrétaire d'Etat au Ministère de la France d'outre-mer), Corniglion-Molinier (Travaux publics, transport et tourisme), and Triboulet (Anciens Combattants).

⁵⁴ P. Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal, le Général Koenig', in *Militaires en République 1870-1962: les officiers, le pouvoir et la vie publique en France*, ed. by O. Forcade, E. Duhamel & P. Vial (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999), pp. 255-89, 268

⁵⁵ Bernard, vol. 1, 280-1; G. Grandval, *Ma mission au Maroc* (Paris: Plon, 1956), p. 58

⁵⁶ Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal', p. 268

plan could not be met.⁵⁷ When this deadline did arrive without a solution in place, serious violence broke out in the town of Oued Zem, with forty-nine Europeans killed. Although the reasons for this incident remain unclear, it has been suggested, by Grandval and his officials, that Koenig and Duval had sanctioned some form of provocation, hoping that an outbreak of Moroccan violence would undermine Grandval's liberal policy and allow for a policy of repression in its place.⁵⁸

After Grandval's resignation, Koenig associated more openly with the interests of the settlers and the military in Morocco, attracting criticism for his excessive concern with the effect of government decisions on the army's morale.⁵⁹ He supported Grandval's successor, the conservative Boyer de Latour, in his attempt to obstruct government policy, and revived contacts between the military and the militant settlers' association *Présence Française*, which had largely been stopped by Fouchet and Grandval. Indeed, on September 15, Koenig and Boyer de Latour's support allowed *Présence Française* to hold a demonstration against the departure from Morocco of General Roger Miquel.⁶⁰ In May 1958, Miquel's support, as Commander of the Toulouse military region, was crucial to the Gaullist and military plans for operation 'Resurrection' in metropolitan France designed to bring about the return of de Gaulle. Contacts made during the Moroccan crisis clearly persisted through the following two years of Gaullist isolation from official positions.

⁵⁷ There is some uncertainty as to Faure's true intentions with regard to the Sultan's return. After resigning, Grandval was apparently told by Faure that his policy had always been to restore Mohammed V to the throne, making Grandval's resignation over this point appear to be a somewhat futile gesture and the result more of his having lost the support of the administration and military in Morocco than an expression of profound differences with the government.

⁵⁸ The fullest account of this episode is in Bernard, vol. 1, p 305. While the allegations against Koenig remain unproven, it is true that Grandval's resignation was ultimately brought about by a mass rebellion against him on the part of the military in Morocco, and July was sufficiently concerned to order Koenig to refrain from any further interference in Moroccan affairs after August 20, 1955. Furthermore, Koenig's collaborator, Duval, had been in charge of French forces at the Sétif massacre in Algeria in 1945 and was a well-known advocate of military repression as the solution to the problems in North Africa. It was no coincidence that August 20 also saw the most violent episode to date in the Algerian war – the Philippeville massacre of Europeans, which abruptly changed Soustelle's policy from one of liberalism to repression.

⁵⁹ P. Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal...', p. 268

⁶⁰ Bernard, vol. 1, pp. 328-9

If Koenig was the chief voice of opposition to Grandval's liberalism, his point of view was more popular among influential Gaullists than that of Grandval. Palewski, appointed to Faure's *Comité de Coordination des Affaires Nord-Africaines*, sided with Koenig rather than supporting Grandval. By October 1955, with Catroux and the government having agreed on the return of the deposed Sultan, the Gaullist ministers were faced with the prospect of the policies they had opposed throughout the Faure ministry – largely those of fellow Gaullists Grandval, July and Catroux – being approved by parliament and implemented. The threat of bringing down the government by resignation – which had emerged as a cherished Gaullist tactic during the EDC debate and was central to Capitant's 'Trojan horse' theory of bringing about Gaullist change from within the 'system' – proved, at this point, to be redundant. The RS ministers had found themselves isolated on the Right, once fellow right-wing leaders Pinay and Duchet had reached agreement with Faure on the necessity of negotiations to bring back Mohammed V. Consequently, RS resignations from government were no longer feared by the Prime Minister.⁶¹ Having publicly reiterated their opposition to the Sultan's return as late as September 9, while Catroux was still engaged in negotiations with Mohammed V in Madagascar,⁶² the RS, by the time Faure's policy was due to be approved by parliament on October 6, risked both humiliating defeat and public exposure of Gaullist divisions. The RS ministers' resignation from government before this National Assembly debate began was therefore inevitable, and represented the defeat of their attempt to slow the pace of change in North Africa from within government.⁶³ The lessons of this experience

⁶¹ For details of the intrigues on the Right as Faure sought to build consensus in the summer of 1955, see Bernard, vol. 1, pp. 298-311

⁶² Bernard, vol. 1, 326. Even the normally moderate *Lettre à L'Union Française* at this stage condemned the government for entering into negotiations with the deposed Sultan. *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 300 (22.9.1955)

⁶³ There is some doubt as to whether the RS ministers managed to offer their resignations before they were sacked by Faure. Triboulet presents the incident as one of Gaullist defiance, calling for a *gouvernement de salut public* in their resignation statement and paying a well-publicised visit to President Coty, while Faure is adamant that he had already decided to remove the Gaullists from his government to avoid risking a rebellion or resignation during the debate. Triboulet, *Un Gaulliste de la IVè*, p.252; E. Faure, *Mémoires* (2 vols.) (Paris: Plon, 1982). Triboulet also claims that the Gaullist

can be seen in the Gaullists' reluctance, over the following two years, to become as closely involved with governments' North African policies as they had with Faure over Morocco.

The resignations did not put an end to Gaullist disunity. Pierre Billotte accepted Faure's offer to succeed Koenig as Minister of Defence, and later accused his predecessor of being too concerned with the army's state of mind to implement necessary government policy.⁶⁴ Billotte was subsequently asked to resign from the ARS parliamentary group, in whose name the RS deputies continued to officially operate until the January 1956 elections. Though Billotte did not in fact resign, and instead went to Morocco to be greeted with hostility by the settlers, the split in parliamentary Gaullist ranks was obvious. This became clearer on October 7, 1955, when Pierre July was expelled from the ARS group, as punishment for having firstly ordered the removal of the puppet sultan Ben Arafa, secondly sided with Faure and Pinay against the Gaullist ministers, and thirdly engaged in negotiations with the *Istiqlal*.⁶⁵ The most liberal of all Gaullists on Moroccan affairs, Clostermann, had already resigned from the parliamentary group, in August 1955.⁶⁶

ministers' action was completely in line with de Gaulle's own views; the evidence of de Gaulle's comments on Morocco appears to contradict this, although the General would certainly have approved of any Gaullist's resignation from a Fourth Republic government. One RS member of government – Corniglion-Molinier – did not actually resign. This fact alone highlights divisions among the Gaullists, demonstrates the government's success in exposing these divisions, and points to the value to Gaullism of gestures such as resignation by high-profile figures like Palewski and Koenig, with lesser-known Gaullists somewhat detached from these tactics.

⁶⁴ P. Billotte, *Le Passé au futur* (Paris: Stock, 1979), p. 138

⁶⁵ One prominent supporter of Gaullists like Billotte and July was Jacques Chaban-Delmas, whose lack of any official role in 1955 meant he was not placed in the same position as his colleagues. He did, however, feel that the RS criticism of Faure's government was excessive given the similarities between Faure's policies and those of Mendès-France. One of the key differences between the situation in 1954 and 1955 for many Gaullists appears to have been the concern, by 1955, that whatever was done in Morocco and Tunisia would weaken France's hand in Algeria. P. Chastenet, *Chaban* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), p. 207

⁶⁶ M. Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: The domestic consequences of international relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 89-90

The International Context

Gaullist divisions on the precise nature of the policies to be applied in Morocco and Tunisia were tempered by some degree of unity on the international implications of events in the protectorates. Increasingly, through 1954-6, the situation was seen in terms of its importance for France's international standing and foreign policy, as much as a problem to be solved by a close focus on conditions in the protectorates themselves. The Gaullists were concerned, in 1954, with their familiar themes of safeguarding French *puissance* and ensuring that their allies in the Western alliance supported their actions in North Africa. By the time Moroccan and Tunisian independence seemed inevitable, however, new themes in international affairs were beginning to occupy the Gaullists. These were chiefly the emergence of a bloc of third world and post-colonial nations as a player on the world stage, and the conviction that the *Union française* was a vital bastion against the twin anti-Western forces of communism and Arab unity.

Throughout 1954, the Gaullists saw the reassertion of authority over the process of change in North Africa as a means of reclaiming some of the prestige that had seemed to be threatened by defeat in Indochina. To this end, Foccart outlined what was at stake in seeking peace in Tunisia, in November 1954: 'De la partie qui se joue en Tunisie dépend l'avenir de l'Afrique du Nord, du maintien de la France en Afrique du Nord dépend son avenir comme grande puissance'.⁶⁷ The situation in North Africa, however, was not seen as being as serious as that which had faced the French at Dien Bien Phu earlier in the year; rather, the prospect of securing great power status was held up as the reward for successful policies in North Africa. French *redressement* was certainly seen as possible, provided that the Western allies display their support for France's efforts. The forum through which such support could be expressed was now the United Nations.⁶⁸ The Gaullists' contributions to the

⁶⁷ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 258 (18.11.1954)

⁶⁸ The Tunisian and Moroccan questions were frequently debated at the UN between March 1952 and October 1955.

parliamentary debate on the protectorates in August 1954, therefore, included a strong appeal to the government not to tolerate the acquiescence of other Western nations in complaints brought by the Arab states against France:

L'agitation en Afrique du Nord ... n'est pas spontanée ... Nous craignons que, derrière toute cette agitation, l'utilisant quand elle existe, la créant quand elle n'existe pas, la nourrissant et l'attisant, il y ait surtout cette conjuration étrangère dont a parlé le maréchal Juin et qui se manifeste en Afrique du Nord depuis 1945 ... Au Caire, à Tétouan, à Tanger, à Washington, à l'ONU, nos ennemis trouvent refuge et bon accueil ... La question est de savoir si les nations qui se disent nos alliés et nos amis vont continuer, non seulement à nous laisser outrager, mais à laisser ouvertement préparer l'émeute dans les territoires africains.⁶⁹

Unfortunately for the Gaullists, the United States in particular showed little evidence of supporting the French position that the problems in the protectorates were under control and not, in any case, a matter for international consideration. The United States, with its important economic and strategic interest in Morocco, had already made clear its position on the dynastic question, strongly opposing Mohammed V's removal in 1953. It was to continue in this policy, ignoring French protests, applying pressure to ensure the Sultan's return in 1955, and clearly expressing its support for Grandval.⁷⁰ Gaullist suspicions about the American threat to French overseas presence, first raised during the Second World War and heightened in Indochina, therefore seemed to be confirmed by October 1955. As for the UN, it has been suggested that the lessons of British colonial problems in the late 1940s showed that it tended to take an interest in colonial problems whenever there was a risk of violence and instability.⁷¹ The Gaullists' calls for a vigorous military campaign

⁶⁹ R. Schmittlein, *AN*, 27.8.1954, *JORF*

⁷⁰ S. El-Machât, *Les Etats-Unis et le Maroc: le choix stratégique 1945-1959* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), pp. 83-132; M. Thomas, 'France Accused: French North Africa before the United Nations, 1952-1962', *Contemporary European History*, 10 (2001), pp. 91-121; M.C. Smouts, *La France à l'ONU: premiers rôles et seconds rangs* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1979), pp. 227-46

⁷¹ Thomas, 'France Accused...', pp. 96-7

before any negotiations, especially in Tunisia, therefore played into the hands of the international organisation whose comments they deemed unwelcome.

Along with the need for moral and political support from other Western powers, the Gaullists sought to convince their allies that French influence in North Africa was a vital strategic asset for the West. General Koenig, in particular, attempted to impress upon France's NATO partners the importance of North Africa, during his spell as Minister of Defence in 1955. Koenig argued that France should be permitted to withdraw some of its troops assigned to NATO forces in Europe, and re-deploy them in North Africa, claiming that this would still allow France to fulfil its NATO commitments as this operation would be carried out in the name of Western security.⁷² Echoes can be seen, in this argument, of the Gaullists' earlier protests about NATO's refusal to consider including Morocco and Tunisia in the alliance. The debate on the Franco-Tunisian conventions was punctuated by protests from Gaullists that the important naval bases in Tunisia were not sufficiently protected; in the light of their potential importance for the Algerian War, Dronne was still criticising the government for this in 1956, pointing out, at the final granting of Tunisian independence, that the naval base at Bizerte was not guaranteed to remain in Western control.⁷³

The Gaullists' increasing interest in North Africa's importance to the Western World as a whole was not only a reaction against international communism, as seen in Indochina, but also against a new Arab and third world political consciousness. By 1954, after the revolution in Egypt and troubles in Iran, the very notion of an Arab state was seen by many Gaullists as a direct threat to France and to the West. Thus, by excluding the Berber population of Morocco from criticism for nationalism and terrorism, they could combine colonial conservatism and defence of the Western

⁷² *DDF*, Note de la direction politique, 3.8.1955; P. Vial, 'Un ministre paradoxal...', pp. 282-85

⁷³ Dronne, *AN*, 31.5.1956

world via the French presence in North Africa. In international affairs, their concern was for the decline of France's historic role in the Arab world, a role that Foccart saw as having generally been that of protector. The erosion of France's 'vocation islamique' was to be lamented, as it would lead to a loss of control over the evolution of much of the Empire, particularly the Muslim parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.⁷⁴ If this was worrying in terms of France's gradual decline, however, there was another much more immediate threat, for the Gaullists: the conference of independent African and Asian nations held at Bandung in Indonesia in April 1955, to which delegates from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria were invited.

Gaullists were, unsurprisingly, divided as to the exact significance of the Bandung conference. However, they agreed that the formation of a new international bloc consisting of former colonies, many of which had links to communism, represented a potential threat. Debré took the most strident view, producing a resounding condemnation of the conference's aims in May 1955. Emphasising that the emergence of the non-European nations represented a threat to Western civilisation, Debré ominously compared French resistance to Bandung to the defeat of the Moors at Poitiers in the eighth century or the Turks' failure to capture Vienna in 1529. This anti-Western movement was all the more dangerous for the opportunity it offered the USSR to undermine the West. Neutralism, the official policy of most of the post-colonial nations, was now to be seen as a manifestation of third world nationalism, and therefore a threat. In response to this somewhat apocalyptic vision, Debré insisted that Western division and 'decadence' were to blame, and that the only way to oppose the new movement was through complete Western unity against any manifestations of non-European advances. France was therefore placed in the front line of this new crusade, with its Western allies now obliged to display complete support.⁷⁵ This demand of unconditional support for France's campaigns in North

⁷⁴ *Lettre à L'Union Française*, 275 (17.3.1955)

⁷⁵ Debré, 'La Leçon de Bandoeng', *Courrier d'Information Politique*, nouvelle série, 9 (May 1955)

Africa, in the name of Western civilisation, was an ever-present theme of Debré's analyses of the Algerian conflict until 1958 and equally, to a lesser extent, in the Fifth Republic.

Debré's view did not go unchallenged by other Gaullists. Foccart, for example, saw the Bandung conference's importance as largely symbolic. Indeed, before the conference took place, he urged the government to find a solution to the Tunisian problem before the nationalists derived further encouragement from Bandung.⁷⁶

After the conference, however, he considered that the countries taking part were too diverse to amount to the kind of coherent movement that Debré perceived, though he did claim that the conference furthered the cause of both Soviet and American anticolonialism.⁷⁷ Edmond Michelet, meanwhile, went as far as to say that the Bandung conference was evidence that the problems of the third world had been understood by communist and other movements but not by the West, and the conference, therefore, represented a challenge to the West, though not in the way that Debré envisaged.⁷⁸ Foccart's opinion that Bandung's importance was chiefly symbolic, however, was due to his belief that France had already arrived at the best way of leading nations to independence, through the process of gradual evolution within a wider community as enshrined in the Brazzaville declaration.⁷⁹ The difference between Foccart and Debré's interpretations of the consequences of Bandung can surely be explained by the fact that Foccart envisaged independence, within a process defined and controlled by France, as a possible course for colonial peoples, whereas Debré appeared to see any further moves towards independence as little more than a threat to Western civilisation. Furthermore, Foccart argued, France should not be overly worried about the conference's condemnation of French

⁷⁶ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 278 (7.4.1955). That the nationalists did derive encouragement from Bandung is confirmed by an Algerian historian of the diplomatic efforts at the UN. K. Mameri, *Les Nations Unies face à la question algérienne (1954-1962)* (Algiers: Société Nationale d'Édition et de Diffusion, 1969), pp. 22-3

⁷⁷ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 280 (21.4.1955) & 281 (28.4.1955)

⁷⁸ J. Charbonnel, *Edmond Michelet* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1987)

⁷⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 280 (21.4.1955)

colonialism as it came from countries which were poor (such as India), repressive, (such as the Gulf states), or in the grip of American neo-colonialism, (such as the Philippines).⁸⁰ Likewise, American support for the conference was dismissed as another manifestation of the United States' simplistic belief that all colonialism played into the hands of communism, and further proof that America was not a useful ally in North Africa. France, on the other hand, had 'lié [son] destin à celui des peuples d'outre-mer',⁸¹ and thus had nothing to fear from condemnations of colonialism. Despite the different interpretations that could be offered as to the significance of this new third world political bloc, the Gaullists recognised that it had changed the parameters of their international role in relation to North African problems. By the time of the RS congress in November 1955, their view of the world was one of three blocs: Soviet, American and the Bandung states, all of which were presumed to have their own interest in internationalising the conflict in North Africa.⁸²

The Gaullists' new awareness of the changes in the international system created by the Bandung conference and the growth of the Arab League soon combined with their existing views of the North African conflict as a cold war crisis. Jacques Chaban-Delmas told the RS in July 1955 that the new situation meant that the period of détente between the USA and the USSR must not be taken as a sign that international tension and the communist threat had diminished. Constant vigilance to the danger of communism spreading via North African nationalism was the new Gaullist watchword.⁸³ In this context, the Gaullists came to see the *Union française* – representing the association of France and the Empire – as a cold war weapon, and

⁸⁰ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 282 (5.5.1955)

⁸¹ *ibid*

⁸² Michel Debré archives, 1DE22/4.2

⁸³ Chastenet, *Chaban*, p. 207. This view also closely resembled much military thinking on the subject. From June 1955, military plans for North Africa were drawn up with the protection of the region against a cold war offensive in mind. Archives de l'Armée de Terre (SHAT), 1H 1103/1 'Plan de protection de l'Afrique du Nord contre la guerre froide', 4.6.1955. In the light of Chaban-Delmas' future role as Defence Minister, the developments in Gaullist thinking in 1955 appear to be of great significance for Gaullist responses to events in North Africa in subsequent years.

embarked on a course similar to the United States' attempts to forestall communism in Asia by a combination of military action and the creation of close economic links intended to create pro-Western sentiment. This strategy will be examined in greater detail in relation to the Gaullists' close interest in the *mise en valeur* of Algeria between 1956 and 1958.

By November 1955, the tone of Gaullist views on France's international status had become considerably less hopeful, with Terrenoire now comparing the situation in North Africa with the crisis faced by Spain in Latin America in the early nineteenth century. The picture painted by Terrenoire was one of irreversible decline following the loss of the Empire, the only consolation for France being that, unlike the Spanish in 1810, the small resistance to the loss of the Empire at least had an effective leader in de Gaulle, even though the General was largely absent from the debate on North Africa.⁸⁴ The optimism of the Fouchet and Mendès-France era had clearly given way to a sense of impending crisis represented by a serious threat to France's hopes of playing a role on the world stage. This theme of impending crisis – like the Gaullists' views on North Africa's international significance, France's need to safeguard its prestige, and the *mise en valeur* of Algeria – dominated the final years of the Fourth Republic. The other main result of Gaullist attempts to come to terms with change in Morocco and Tunisia – disunity in Gaullist ranks – also persisted through the early stages of the Algerian crisis, until early 1958, accompanied by a sense of urgency that the independence of the protectorates had, by early 1956, conferred on Gaullist North African policy.

⁸⁴ Terrenoire, 'Concordances avec la fin de l'Empire espagnol', *Courrier d'Information Politique*, nouvelle série, 18 (November 1955). Terrenoire's pessimism was compounded by his assessment that while Spain at least had the consolation of seeing its language used in its former colonies, France would not even have this crumb of comfort, so great was the influence of the English language via American anticolonialism.

CHAPTER 7

WAR IN ALGERIA: NOVEMBER 1954 - FEBRUARY 1956

While attention in metropolitan France was still focused on Morocco, Tunisia and European defence, the Algerian War began on November 1, 1954. Although the Gaullists were no more or less immediately aware than any other political groups of the importance of the events of November 1, they quickly adopted the crisis in Algeria as their central area of concern. Algeria became an issue to which all else was secondary, with the possible exception of constitutional reform, which was seen as the only solution to France's apparent decline. This chapter will deal with the early stages of the war in Algeria, by focusing on Gaullist policies and assessments of the situation's international implications, and the war's effect on Gaullist unity. In addition, reflecting the crucial importance the Gaullists attached to Algeria, it will deal with the question of a necessary change of regime as a possible outcome of or solution to the new colonial crisis. It also offers an opportunity to analyse in some detail the behaviour of a leading Gaullist in a position of direct responsibility for a colonial crisis. Jacques Soustelle, as Governor-General of Algeria between February 1955 and February 1956, exerted considerably more influence than Christian Fouchet or Pierre July were able to wield as Ministers for Moroccan and Tunisian affairs. Soustelle's influence, moreover, was not limited to the implementation of official policy; his unofficial actions in Algeria had great influence on the way in which Gaullism, during the final years of the Fourth Republic, sought to exploit events in Algeria to its advantage. At the same time as attempting to further what he saw as the Gaullist cause in Algeria, Soustelle also raised questions of party unity, further contributing to the complex picture of Gaullist priorities and policies in response to crisis in North Africa. In contrast, Catroux's disastrous experience, when he was nominated as Soustelle's replacement in January 1956, but had to resign his post almost immediately in the face of *pied-noir* protests, clearly displayed the limits that governed the acceptability of Gaullists and Gaullism among the Europeans of Algeria.

The first fifteen months of the war in Algeria were crucial with regard to the development of Gaullist policy and strategy for the final years of the Fourth Republic. It is generally acknowledged that following the election defeat of January 1956, the Gaullists sought to maximise the perception of Algeria as a decisive crisis for the Nation, while simultaneously developing new ideas that were to become important elements of Fifth Republic Gaullism.¹ While this is true to some extent, it is clear that many of the Gaullists' apparently new ideas and depictions of crisis in Algeria were already in place by January 1956, having evolved between November 1954 and the elections. Their views on new approaches to colonial, constitutional and international questions may well have been designed, through 1955, with the elections in mind, although the more unconventional aspect of Gaullist activities – direct contacts with groups such as the military and North African settlers – also continued throughout the same period. The themes that the Gaullists focused on after the elections – condemnation of the regime, the need for both reform and restoration of order in Algeria, and emphasis on the international dimensions of decolonisation – were all prominent in Gaullist discourse between November 1954 and January 1956. That the Gaullists devoted much energy and debate to these subjects from 1956 to 1958 is undeniable; the depth and breadth of thinking and organisation that they were able to undertake in those years was possible because of the first steps taken in the preceding fifteen months

First Reactions: Responsibility, Reforms and New Possibilities

The Gaullists' first reaction to the outbreak of violence in Algeria was to see the situation as a domestic policy crisis, and they initially concentrated on blaming the government and the administration in Algeria for failing to control the situation. In the first parliamentary debates on Algeria after November 1, Gaullists criticised the

¹ M. Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: the Domestic Consequences of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 91-101; B. Gaïti, *De Gaulle prophète de la cinquième République*, (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1998), pp. 221-62

authorities for failing to prevent the new outbreak of violence. Léon Haumesser, deputy for Constantine, complained that he had warned, in 1952, of the dangers of government liberalism in North Africa, that terrorist groups had in fact been operating unchecked for a month before November 1, and that as a result of ignoring the warnings, the government was now faced with a repeat of the problems in Indochina and Tunisia. Léon Muscatelli, senator for Algiers, argued, however, that it was incorrect to blame Mendès-France and Fouchet's policies in Tunisia for the violence in Algeria, though this did not prevent him from seeing the causes of the rebellion in government weakness.² Muscatelli argued, like many Gaullists, that Algerian separatism was essentially 'imported' from the Middle East, and spread by religious leaders. The local administration was to be blamed for allowing this to happen, especially through its policy of encouraging the nationalist *Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques* (MTLD) to operate freely in an attempt to undermine the *Parti Populaire Algérien* (PPA), which was linked to communism and therefore considered a greater threat. This error of judgement, according to Muscatelli, was compounded by under-administration, which made it difficult for the authorities to keep track of nationalist activity.³ Nationalism, rather than communism, therefore seemed to be the principal threat perceived by Gaullists in Algeria, in contrast to earlier attempts to claim that the two were indistinguishable. The theme of laying at least some of the blame for the rebellion at the door of the local administration was quickly seized upon by the Gaullists, with Foccart attacking the local officials for failing to fully implement the Statute of 1947 and therefore creating the present situation.⁴ The RPF, however, had been implicated in the

² Haumesser, *AN*, 12.11.1954, *JORF*

³ Muscatelli, *CR*, 24.11.1954, *JORF*. Muscatelli was particularly concerned that prefects in Algeria did not have the same powers and authorities of their counterparts in France.

⁴ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 265 (6.1.1955). The Statute of 1947 had proposed recognition of Arabic as an official language; creation of an *Assemblée Algérienne* with powers to modify metropolitan laws for Algeria; the creation of elected local councils; separation of Church and State for Muslims, and enfranchisement of women. The dual college electoral system, which ensured European control of the political process, was maintained, however. Most Algerian elected representatives refused to accept the Statute; the *pièdes-noirs* mobilised to obstruct its implementation and subsequently rigged the 1948 elections to prevent the election of nationalist candidates.

attempts to undermine the application of the Statute's limited reforms in Algeria, while officially supporting it in France. This fact was now forgotten by metropolitan politicians, displaying the divide that had existed between metropolitan and North African Gaullism in the early Fourth Republic.

Jacques Soustelle's period as Governor-General did not put an end to Gaullist criticism of the administration in Algeria for failing to prevent the violence, although criticisms of Soustelle personally were rare. The Gaullists, in keeping with their opposition to the political establishment in metropolitan politics, saw the colonial civil service in Algeria as complacent and out of touch with Algeria's needs.

Likewise, just as the movement for economic 'participation' was a key Gaullist policy in metropolitan France, Gaullists involved in this area of policy attempted to blame the rebellion in Algeria on poorly-managed and irresponsible capitalism.

Jacques Dauer's *Paris-Jeunes* argued that 'Nous devons dire ... que nous ne défendons pas à Alger les intérêts exploiteurs capitalistes qui ne sont en rien les intérêts de la France'.⁵ It was argued that an excessive concern for economic profit alone had led to the loss of Indochina, because of a reluctance to commit to a costly and long-term project, and that the same mistake could be made in Algeria. Thus, one particular strand of Gaullism was vigorously rejecting the so-called *Cartiériste* argument – that the cost of keeping Algeria French was too high to justify – even before the campaign in favour of withdrawal for economic reasons had begun to gather strength.⁶ For most Gaullists, however, the key to re-establishing control in Algeria, other than military force, was essentially a question of political will.

⁵ *Paris-Jeunes*, 43 (15.2.1955)

⁶ The argument that Algeria cost more than it contributed to France attracted support in France following the publication of an article to this effect by Raymond Cartier in August 1956. It had already been advanced by the non-communist left, initially by Raymond Aron, and by some economic commentators, in relation to the continuing prosperity of the Netherlands despite the loss of Indonesia, which refuted both the Marxist argument that the imperial powers were economically dependent on their colonies, and the received idea in economic circles that France needed Algeria as a market and a source of resources. The economic argument for decolonisation gathered strength between 1956 and 1958, opposed by those, like the Gaullists, who believed that Algeria's economic weakness could be eradicated by a vigorous campaign of investment and development. C.R. Ageron, 'Le Cartiérisme', in C.R. Ageron & C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Histoire de la France coloniale*, vol. 3: *Le déclin* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991), pp. 373-86

If the Gaullists agreed on the causes of the rebellion – foreign-led terrorism encouraged by French neglect – they also displayed a surprising amount of unity on the need for reforms. Gaullists generally agreed on the need for social reforms, their differences only becoming more obvious when political reform was in question. Reforms of three kinds were required: immediate moves to improve living conditions, an effort to ensure equal opportunities for French and Algerian communities, especially for young Algerians, and the progressive economic transformation – or *mise en valeur* – of Algeria. Muscatelli argued that the most pressing need was for education, which, it was hoped, would give young Algerians a reason to feel loyalty to France.⁷ More generally, Gaullists expressed hope that the Statute of 1947 might now be properly implemented, though their willingness to pin their hopes on legislation proposed seven years previously did reveal the lack of innovation behind many Gaullist calls for reform, however well-intentioned.⁸

The general calls for reform, referring to past attempts rather than proposing concrete plans for the future, might be explained by the relatively disorganised nature of the Gaullist movement in late 1954 and early 1955,⁹ which made it difficult for discussion and elaboration of a specific agenda to take place. The first real coming-together of Gaullists in 1955 did not occur until the RS *Journée d'Etudes des Cadres*, held on June 5 with a view to preparing a platform for the general election of 1956. The motion that emerged from this meeting of RS leaders¹⁰ called for: 'une politique hardie et loyale de réformes économiques, sociales et politiques de manière à élever

⁷ Muscatelli, *CR*, 24.11.1954

⁸ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 265 (6.1.1955); *Paris-Jeunes*, 43 (15.2.1955)

⁹ There was a final RPF rally in December 1954, but it was too soon after the events of Nov 1 for the participants to appreciate the seriousness of the situation or develop a response to it. In addition, it would have been difficult for the RPF, in its last formal meeting, to elaborate a new policy on any subject. In the event, de Gaulle's speech hardly mentioned Algeria.

¹⁰ Chaban-Delmas was, in the event, the only senior RS figure present at this conference, though it did bring together most of the movement's deputies and local representatives. Soustelle remained in Algeria, and neither Debré nor Michelet attended. The consequences of the Algerian crisis for Gaullist unity will be discussed in more detail elsewhere, but it might be noted that this was an early example of some prominent Gaullists' loss of interest in conventional forms of political activity. *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, numéro spécial (June 1955); H.J. Tümmers, *Das 'Centre National des Républicains Sociaux': Eine Gaullistische Partei unter der IV. Republik*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universität Augsburg, 1980), pp. 136-7

le niveau de vie des populations, à associer étroitement les musulmans français d'Algérie à l'administration et à la vie politique sans discrimination'. This motion was as clear in its broad principles as it was vague in its detailed proposals, demonstrating that the Gaullists, like most metropolitan politicians, had few specific ideas for meaningful reform in Algeria, and that the RS' thoughts were turning to the coming elections in which statements of principle and intent over Algeria would play a large part. Indeed, the RS senator, Bouquerel, went on to argue that just implementing reform was as important as the specific content of any measures, as its principal value would be to demonstrate the extent of France's commitment to Algeria.¹¹ Foccart, normally keen to put flesh on the bones of any vague statements of principle, also limited himself to declarations of intent, writing that the RS' policy was in favour of evolution and reform, though he did add that this principle applied to the question of relations between France and its overseas territories, as well as to the internal affairs of those territories.¹² The RS congress of November 1955 mirrored Foccart's comments, the question of reform being examined in the context of an improvement in living standards, to be implemented equally across the whole of the *Union française*.¹³ While this might be seen as an attempt to avoid commitment to a specific policy for Algeria so close to the elections, Chaban-Delmas did emphasise that the RS remained completely committed to reform, insisting, indeed, that the need for military action against the nationalists must not be used as a pretext for delaying reform.

The Gaullists, whether through a lack of expertise or reluctance to commit to a specific programme, remained somewhat vague on the nature of social reform. They were more forthright, however, on the issue of reaching out to the disillusioned young Algerians. Michel Debré pointed out that France had a number of civil obligations in Algeria, among which were education, facilitating participation in

¹¹ Bouquerel, *CR*, 4.8.1955, *JORF*

¹² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 304 (20.10.1955)

¹³ Tümmers, pp. 146-48; P. Chastenot, *Chaban* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), p. 209

government, and instructing the Algerians in notions of human rights and liberties.¹⁴ While this appears to be a faithful representation of the traditional *mission civilisatrice*, and does not necessarily amount to a liberal reform programme, Debré was characteristic of the Gaullists in that he quickly appreciated the need for France to make a more intensive effort in Algeria. He argued that implementation of the measures he proposed would reassert the link between Algeria and France, therefore removing any grounds for secession among the majority of the Algerians. In particular, the emerging young Muslim élite – essentially a French creation – was to be given a prominent role in Algerian civic society.¹⁵ This theme found support among the Gaullist youth movement. Dauer argued that, given the large young population of Algeria and the *Union française* as a whole, an effort to give these young people a meaningful role in society would ensure the continued link between France and its overseas territories, and would also allow France to harness the potential of the *Union française* and therefore look forward to a future as a world power.¹⁶

If the civic society of Algeria was to be developed as a symbol of French commitment and an example for the rest of the *Union française*, the same might be said of the Gaullists' interest in the *mise en valeur* of Algeria. This campaign for intense economic development, going far beyond the simple question of meeting the population's needs and actually creating a new area of economic activity, reached its

¹⁴ Debré, *CR*, 24.11.1954, *JORF*

¹⁵ Debré in *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 6 (November 1954)

¹⁶ *Paris-Jeunes*, 44 (15.3.1955). The demographic situation of Algeria – with the Muslim population increasing by 250,000 each year – was influential in early Gaullist attempts to explain the problem. Jacques Soustelle's close collaborator in Algeria, his fellow ethnologist Germaine Tillion, saw the Algerian problem as essentially a demographic one, a view that was well received by Soustelle at the beginning of his spell in Algeria in 1955. Tillion's argument was that the demographic growth presented France with both obligations and a great opportunity, but that withdrawal was morally unacceptable, as it would abandon the Algerians. G. Tillion, *Algeria: the realities*, trans. by R. Matthews (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958); B. Ullmann, *Jacques Soustelle: le mal aimé* (Paris: Plon, 1995), pp. 195-6; H. Elsenhans, *La Guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962. La transition d'une France à une autre. Le passage de la IV^e à la V^e République*, trans. by V. Goupy (Paris: Publisud, 1999), pp. 151-2

peak after the discovery of significant oil and gas reserves in the Sahara,¹⁷ but some Gaullists showed an interest in it during 1955. Raymond Dronne, one of the most conservative Gaullists, argued that the improvement of living conditions in Algeria would depend on persuading French business interests to make a large-scale commitment to Algeria.¹⁸ Thus, in an apparent contradiction with Dauer's suspicion of French industry's interest in overseas territories, the extension of the French economic progress of the 1950s to Algeria was envisaged as a means to strengthen the link between Algeria and France. That substantial economic investment in Algeria was envisaged only as a means of ensuring that France retained control was emphasised by another conservative Gaullist deputy, Jean Godin, who completely ruled out independence by asserting that Algeria could never survive economically outside a greater French community. His support for investment was therefore based on the fact that, since France and Algeria were inextricably linked, it was only logical that French industry should extend its operations to Algeria.¹⁹ The connection between this intensive economic development and the demographic issues raised by Debré and Dauer was clear; *Paris-Jeunes* soon became the first Gaullist publication to speak of developing the Sahara as a concrete step towards what it described as the need to 'sauver la France par l'Union française'.²⁰ The creation of economic activity was seen as a means of channelling the great energy and aspirations of the young population of France's African territories, to the extent that even foreign investment might be encouraged in an attempt to devote as much capital as possible to France's new 'vocation saharienne'.²¹

In subsequent years, such ideas were to become closely linked to the Sahara's usefulness as a source of resources and testing facilities for France's nuclear energy

¹⁷ On the search for and discovery of oil and gas reserves in the Sahara, and its importance for France, see Elsenhans, pp. 267-9, 320-1. Gaullist views on the Sahara will be examined in more detail in chapter 8.

¹⁸ Dronne, *AN*, 10.12.1954, *JORF*

¹⁹ Godin, *AN*, 2.2.1955, *JORF*

²⁰ *Paris-Jeunes*, 45 (15.4.1955)

²¹ *ibid*

programme. While the role of Gaullists in relation to the French nuclear programme is often seen in terms of military policy, their initial interest in the subject was in the civilian applications of atomic energy. The problems in North Africa provided a valuable opportunity, and a new sense of urgency, for the Gaullists with an interest in the nuclear question. In 1955, Gaston Palewski had ministerial responsibility for the development of the French atomic energy programme,²² and he and Soustelle began to investigate the possibility that one of the biggest obstacles to North Africa's economic development – the lack of energy sources – could be solved by the development of nuclear power in Algeria.²³ Indeed, Palewski envisaged the development of the whole of the *Union française* into a viable economic unit through nuclear energy.²⁴

Palewski's spell as minister responsible for the French nuclear programme, which included the government's secret commitment to pursue a military application of

²² Gaullist interest in France's being able to develop a nuclear energy capacity had begun early in the Fourth Republic with de Gaulle's establishment of the *Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique (CEA)* in January, 1946. The nuclear question had contributed to the Gaullist and military opposition to the EDC. Debré warned in 1954 that the military co-operation envisaged by the treaty risked not only undermining the French nuclear programme, but also obliging France to share nuclear technology with West Germany, creating a rearmed Germany with nuclear capacity and removing any advantage France might have gained from its continental nuclear monopoly. The defeat of the EDC was therefore viewed as a great encouragement by the advocates of a military nuclear capacity. This would also fulfil Gaullist foreign policy aims in allowing France to become an independent third force between the superpowers. By the end of the Fourth Republic, with colonial problems creating Gaullist suspicion and antagonism towards the USA and the USSR, such a position still retained all its appeal of 1954. After the defeat of EDC, the Gaullists defended the independent nuclear programme against the proposed joint European atomic energy project, EURATOM. This campaign, led by Michel Debré, resembled the anti-EDC campaign in many ways, though colonial problems and the less emotive nature of the subject prevented it from achieving the same prominence. The nuclear question was increasingly used by Gaullists as a means to demonstrate their commitment to national sovereignty, by resisting both American and Soviet attempts to impose a test-ban treaty. Debré's campaign increasingly used the problems in the *Union française* as an argument for retaining France's freedom of action in this domain. This was necessary, he argued, both to ensure the defence of French interests outside the existing alliances and, from 1955-6, to retain the possibility of investing hopes for the development of Algeria and the *Union française* along with France in nuclear energy. For the Gaullists' involvement in the Fourth Republic's nuclear programme, see W. Mendl, 'The Background of French Nuclear Policy', *International Affairs*, 41 (1965), pp. 22-36. On the Gaullist linkage of EDC and nuclear energy, see D. Mongin, *La Bombe atomique française 1945-1958* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1997), pp. 295-9; on the anti-EURATOM campaign, M. Debré, *Trois Républiques pour une France: mémoires, vol. 2: agir 1946-1958* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988), pp. 233-48; P. Samuel, *Michel Debré: l'architecte du général* (Paris: Arnaud Franel, 1999), pp. 122-25.

²³ *Le Monde*, 5.7.1955

²⁴ G. Palewski, 'Présentation', in *La Nef, numéro spécial: L'atome, notre destin*, (September 1955), pp. 5-9

atomic energy, witnessed a crucial rapprochement between the scientists and the *fonctionnaires* of the CEA and the military. Not all *militaires* were yet convinced of the merits of a nuclear force, but with Koenig as Minister of Defence, the military programme advanced in the face of these reservations, largely through the efforts of the two Gaullist ministers.²⁵ Indeed, given Chaban-Delmas' presence in the same government, this might be seen as one area in which Gaullists exerted considerable influence on policy.²⁶ The direct link between the nuclear programme and Algeria - which would be seen in the usefulness of the Sahara as a test site in 1960 - was not yet clear in the Fourth Republic, other than in general considerations of defence and foreign policy. Palewski, however, was also responsible for the Sahara in the Faure government, and he appointed de Gaulle's close collaborator, Olivier Guichard, to an important post in the CEA. Guichard was later to become an influential figure both in the intrigues of May 1958, and in Fifth Republic Algerian policy, through his post as head of the *Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes* (OCRS), with responsibility for continuing the *mise en valeur* of the Sahara.²⁷ Thus, the seemingly technical and relatively minor question of the role of the Sahara desert in the development of nuclear energy came to assume considerable symbolic and actual importance for the Gaullists, as an example of the kind of vigorous modernisation and development effort that might be possible.

²⁵ Mongin, *La bombe atomique*, pp. 349-77 and 'Le rôle des militaires dans le choix de l'arme atomique avant 1958', in *Militaires en République 1870-1962: les officiers, le pouvoir et la vie publique*, ed. by O. Forcade, E. Duhamel & P. Vial, (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999), pp. 89-97

²⁶ Chaban-Delmas claimed that his motivation for entering the Mollet government in 1956 was solely to supervise the nuclear programme. Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires pour demain*, Paris, Flammarion, 1997, p. 285

²⁷ J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, vol. 3: *le souverain* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), pp. 107, 201-4

The Limits of Reform

As has been seen, most Gaullists' first reactions to the beginning of the rebellion involved some kind of reform. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that this extended as far as unconditional support for any reform plan, opposition to the use of military force to restore order, or wide-ranging changes in the constitutional links between Algeria and France. Léon Muscatelli, while pointing out that French negligence had created the situation, cautioned against too broad a reform programme, arguing that Algeria was too 'delicate' to support radical change,²⁸ while Haumesser went as far as to say that there was nothing to be gained by the immediate implementation of reform aimed at widening participation in civic society, as the Muslims would simply not know how to use their newly-acquired political rights.²⁹ General de Monsabert was equally sceptical about the possibility of achieving political change, claiming that there could be no realistic hope of finding *interlocuteurs valables* in Algeria, just as the search for negotiating partners in Morocco and Tunisia had frequently proved difficult.³⁰

The limits of the Gaullists' liberalism were demonstrated more clearly by their strong support for intensive military action in Algeria. Debré's immediate reaction to the outbreak of the rebellion was that restoration of order must precede any discussions about change in Algeria,³¹ while Haumesser insisted that the situation in Algeria owed much to the inadequacy of the police and military presence there, as well as the legal requirement to open judicial inquiries into the death of nationalist forces at the hands of French troops, thereby preventing the required vigorous military response. This argument was supported by de Monsabert, who complained that the French military and civilian authorities showed excessive leniency towards terrorists,³² and

²⁸ Muscatelli, *CR*, 24.11.1945, *JORF*

²⁹ Haumesser, *AN*, 12.11.1954, *JORF*

³⁰ De Monsabert, *AN*, 28.7.1955, *JORF*

³¹ Debré in *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 6 (November 1954); Haumesser, *AN*, 10.12.1954, *JORF*

³² The Gaullists always referred to the nationalist guerrilla forces as terrorists or rebels, thereby denying them the legitimacy that would have been implied in a description of them as a nationalist army.

called for complete control and surveillance of the whole of Algeria.³³ This latter measure amounted to support for the government's decision to introduce a state of emergency throughout Algeria, allowing for comprehensive surveillance, detention of suspected nationalist terrorists, and extension of police powers.³⁴ Their belief that such measures were necessary was surely strengthened by Soustelle's frequent assertions that the existing military effort in Algeria was insufficient to deal with the rebellion, and they therefore willingly supported the government on the state of emergency legislation. Although few Gaullists – other than Soustelle – were in a position to affect government policy on Algeria, Pierre Billotte, as Minister of Defence from October 1955, did show support for the view held by the Governor-General and some in the military, that it would be desirable to augment forces in Algeria by the use of conscripts, an issue that was to become more divisive throughout 1956-58.³⁵ Gaullist criticism of the military effort was rarely heard, and tended to be limited to specific points, such as Muscatelli's warning that the policy of *regroupement* – forcibly moving the Algerian population into 'safe areas', supposedly allowing easier identification and pursuit of FLN (*Front de Libération Nationale*) forces – risked being counter-productive.³⁶ Fouchet, though generally preoccupied with Morocco and Tunisia, also sounded a note of caution, arguing that a *politique de force* could not be expected to succeed in the long term.³⁷ Much later, the first reports of torture were reported with some sympathy by the *Lettre à l'Union Française*,³⁸ though most Gaullists considered the debate over the moral aspects of torture a potential threat to the army's morale.

³³ De Monsabert, *AN*, 2.2.1955 & 31.3.1955, *JORF*

³⁴ The state of emergency legislation raised important questions of torture; these will be examined in more detail in relation to the Battle of Algiers in 1957, from which most of the allegations of torture arose.

³⁵ P. Billotte, *Le passé au futur* (Paris: Stock, 1979), p. 140

³⁶ Muscatelli, *CR*, 24.11.1954, *JORF*

³⁷ Fouchet, *AN*, 10.12.1954, *JORF*

³⁸ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 315 (5.1.1956)

The Gaullists' vigorous defence of military action in Algeria reflected their assessment of the nature of the nationalist movement. Their general view was that the nationalists were divisive and extremist, attempting to create hatred between the French and Algerian communities. Evidence for this was seen in the FLN's attempt to ban Muslims from engaging in the same activities as the French, which was viewed as proof that they intended to accentuate the differences between the French and the Algerians, in contrast to the Gaullist vision of a broader community.³⁹ The massacre of Europeans at Philippeville on August 20, 1955, was seen as further proof that the nationalists intended to create a deep and bitter division between the two communities; Foccart compared it to the beginning of a civil war, aware that it would probably have the intended effect of increasing violence and extremism on the *pied-noir* side too.⁴⁰ Along with denunciation of the nationalists' methods, the Gaullists insisted that they were pursuing an unrealistic ideal in hoping for an independent Algeria, repeating the mantra that Algeria could not survive without France.⁴¹ In their views of nationalism in Algeria as alien and divisive, the Gaullists echoed the sentiments of Jacques Soustelle, who insisted that it was only the nationalists, and not the Algerian people as a whole, who were anti-French. Such statements were happily reproduced by Gaullists in France, who frequently expressed complete confidence in Soustelle's ability to win over the majority of Algerian people to this argument.⁴² While these expressions of support rarely amounted to statements of policy in their own right – though Foccart did call for the government to support Soustelle against those claiming that no change was necessary in Algeria⁴³ – it is perhaps significant that most Gaullist statements of confidence in Soustelle came before August 20, when the Philippeville massacre made the Governor-General more

³⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 289 (23.6.1955). The Gaullists' dominant view of the nationalists was that they were inspired by foreign forces; this will be analysed in a later section.

⁴⁰ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 297 (1.9.55)

⁴¹ Haumesser, for example, claimed that France's withdrawal would 'faire revenir l'Algérie mille ans en arrière'. *AN*, 12.10.1955, *JORF*

⁴² Examples of complete Gaullist support for Soustelle can be found, among others, in *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 268 (27.1.1955); *Paris-Jeunes*, 42 (1.2.1955); *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, numéro spécial (June 1955.)

⁴³ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 285 (26.5.1955)

sympathetic to strong military action and to the *pied-noir* cause. Some priority of reform over repression can, therefore, be seen in the first half of 1955, in spite of the Gaullists' deep suspicions of the nationalists' methods and intentions. Calls for repression, however, were always present in Gaullist reactions to the situation in Algeria, and they became more prominent as the FLN campaign became more violent.

The Gaullists' unity on the need for both reform and military pursuit of nationalist forces was not matched in their opinions on the need for change in the relationship between Algeria and France. Although the Gaullists had devoted much time to reflection on the constitution, and had indeed based their opposition to the Fourth Republic largely on their dissatisfaction with it, they were not able to agree on the exact nature of desirable relations between the metropole and Algeria. Association within a federal context, assimilation and integration were all proposed by Gaullists during 1955. Of these, a federal constitution with provision for close association between metropolitan France and its overseas territories was the most prominent, perhaps because of its role in attempts to find a new relationship between France and the North African protectorates. This was the policy outlined by Chaban-Delmas in October 1955, with the principle being 'association librement consentie', a phrase that closely mirrored the arrangement being made for Morocco and Tunisia at the time, following the negotiations between Catroux and Mohammed V.⁴⁴ It represented a surprisingly liberal attitude, in that it proposed the same status for Algeria – officially not a colony or protectorate, but an integral part of metropolitan France – as for the rest of the *Union française*. A month later, the national RS congress approved a similar proposal for 'interdependence' between France and its overseas territories.⁴⁵ It must be noted, however, that this apparent liberalism may have been expressed, in the autumn of 1955, with the immediate crisis in Morocco and Tunisia

⁴⁴ Chaban-Delmas at RS *Congrès Régional du Sud-Est*, Marseille, quoted in *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 304 (20.10.1955)

⁴⁵ Tümmers, p. 147; *La Nation Républicaine et Sociale*, 242 (4.11.1955)

in mind more than the still vague notion that relations between Algeria and France might also have to be renegotiated. One must also bear in mind that the RS congresses, at which such policies were made, tended to be ignored by figures such as Soustelle and Debré, who were both more conservative on the constitutional question, and arguably closer to the mainstream of Gaullist thought on many matters.

By the time of the January 1956 elections, some RS candidates were still expressing their support for federalism in general throughout France's overseas territories. The official policy of the Gaullist party, however, was by now integration. Integration was the dominant idea among the military and the *pieds-noirs*, and Soustelle's role in creating it is examined in further detail below. It proposed, in opposition to a loose federation, complete equality between France and Algeria with no distinctions along lines of geography, citizenship or race. It had already attracted the support of Gaullists in parliament, with the deputy Marcel Ribi  re advocating complete integration, in October 1955, as the only solution to Algeria's problems.⁴⁶ By January 1956, integration had become the RS' official policy for the elections.⁴⁷ This fact alone demonstrated the influence that Soustelle had had on Gaullist policy, as well as the growing awareness that Algeria demanded a different response from Morocco and Tunisia. It is significant that the traditional French colonial doctrine of assimilation, which differed from integration in that it made no provision for acceptance of the differences of religion and language that existed between France and Algeria, received very little public support from Gaullists.⁴⁸ Indeed, General

⁴⁶ Ribi  re, *AN*, 13.10.1955, *JORF*. Chaban-Delmas also spoke in favour of 'int  gration progressive et   volutive' in the same debate, though he added that he considered himself and the RS still to approve a federal policy. Integration, therefore, appears to have been able to co-exist with federalism for some time, perhaps because of the Gaullists' total public support for Soustelle, before a choice had to be made between loose association and the closest possible links.

⁴⁷ M.F. Chevrillon, *Les R  publicains Sociaux ou la travers  e du d  sert* (unpublished *m  moire de ma  trise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1965), pp. 266-73

⁴⁸ The October 1955 Congress report made reference to the doctrine of '100 million de Fran  ais', but this did not amount to a statement of support for assimilation; rather, it demonstrated the persistence of old colonial notions in the evolution of new policies. T  mmers, p. 147

Catroux had already insisted in parliament that the mistake of assuming that the Algerian Muslims were or could become French must be avoided.⁴⁹

The constitutional debate focused attention on the condition and prospects of the Algerian Muslim population. Careful study of this subject was considered essential if the Algerians were to be successfully integrated into the French population.

However, in line with the RPF's earlier attempts to penetrate the European community, the Gaullists also devoted some attention to the problems facing the *pieds-noirs*. Soustelle's departure from Algeria as their hero in February 1956, and Catroux's appointment and subsequent resignation as his replacement, provide an opportunity to assess the Gaullists' views of the European community in Algeria. An ambiguous position can be identified in the Gaullist press, with the extremism of the *pied-noir* opposition to Catroux strongly condemned, while the Gaullists derived some satisfaction from the fact that Soustelle had proved such a success among the Europeans.⁵⁰ The subject of Gaullist links with the *pied-noir* community, and with the military, during Soustelle's period in Algeria, is certainly worthy of more detailed analysis in the light of the extensive contacts between these groups in 1958. The chief conduit for Gaullist-*pied-noir* contacts was the veterans' associations, which occupied a particularly prominent position in Algerian civic society. Relations between the two, however, were not as close as might be expected, perhaps because of the latent suspicion of de Gaulle that still existed in Algeria. Indeed, the normally conservative General de Monsabert, who had, alongside Juin, commanded the largely *pied-noir* forces in the Italian campaign, was keen to champion the cause of the Muslim veterans. He argued that by showing them the same respect that was enjoyed by European veterans, given the importance of the veteran in the *pied-noir* society around them, these influential Muslims might be persuaded to remain loyal to

⁴⁹ Catroux, *AN*, 18.10.1955, *JORF*

⁵⁰ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 320 (9.2.1956) & 321 (16.2.1956)

France.⁵¹ In contrast, adopting a position more in line with what might be expected of Gaullist-veterans-*pied-noir* links, the deputy Olivier de Sesmaisons attempted, in March 1955, to introduce legislation granting French *anciens combattants* in Algeria the right to bear arms for self-defence.⁵² In addition to nurturing support among veterans in Algeria, the Gaullists continued to express solidarity with the metropolitan activities of the *anciens d'Indochine*, though a repeat of the demonstrations of April and May 1954 was not yet envisaged in 1955.⁵³

Along with support for veterans, the Gaullists enthusiastically took up the cause of the troops fighting in Algeria, arguing in particular for their right to play a more political role. General de Monsabert was especially active in this respect, calling for the army to be given real decision-making authority and for its social role among the Algerian people to be extended.⁵⁴ These measures were gradually implemented by the government, though their consequences in the form of torture and excessive politicisation of the officer corps, from 1956 onwards, were not always positive. In the meantime, the RS congress of November 1955 heard an appeal to the government to put the interests of *défense nationale*, in relation to events in Algeria, above all other matters, reaffirming the absolute priority that the Gaullists accorded to support for the armed forces.⁵⁵ On the same subject, Dronne defended *militaires'* right to express their views on political subjects and the conduct of the war in Algeria.⁵⁶ He argued that this was a logical development of the political and social tasks the army was being asked to perform, though, once again, the consequences in the form of indiscipline in subsequent years might be said to have been of questionable benefit.

⁵¹ de Monsabert, *AN*, 2.2.1955, *JORF*. It must be noted, however, in the face of this apparent liberalism, that de Monsabert went on to say that respect for *anciens combattants* was in fact a more important reform for Algeria than social and political measures such as the 'imposition' of the suffrage on Muslim women.

⁵² De Sesmaisons, *AN*, 31.3.1955, *JORF*. The proposal was withdrawn after the government expressed its opposition.

⁵³ *Paris-Jeunes*, 45 (15.4.1955)

⁵⁴ de Monsabert, *AN*, 28.7.1955, *JORF*

⁵⁵ J.P. Palewski at RS *Congrès National*, Asnières, 18-20.11.1955, Tümmers, pp. 144-6

⁵⁶ Dronne, *AN*, 8.10.1955, *JORF*

In the light of the support the Gaullists received in 1958 from a politicised, confident and relatively undisciplined officer corps, however, de Monsabert and Dronne might be seen as the precursors of a more general Gaullist offensive aimed at enlisting the army in Algeria to their cause.

Civilian activities among the *pied-noir* community received similar encouragement from the Gaullists. The creation of self-defence groups, for example, was looked upon favourably,⁵⁷ while the *Fédération des maires* – one of the most influential *pied-noir* political groupings in a society where politics was often conducted outside parliament – received the backing of defence minister Pierre Billotte, who praised their courage in the face of terrorist activity and called for greater support in France for the *pieds-noirs*.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Foccart attempted to explain why the *pieds-noirs* were dissatisfied with the evolution of the Muslim population since 1944. The problem, he claimed, was that the Statute of 1947 would have been adequate, and the *pieds-noirs* always knew they would be able to undermine it, but since then the *immobilisme* of the domestic regime had prevented even moderate reform from being properly implemented.⁵⁹ That this should be used as a defence of the *pieds-noirs* frustration revealed the possibilities that Foccart saw in identifying the Gaullists' dissatisfaction with the regime and the problems in Algeria. His apparent sympathy with the Europeans' habit of assuming that any reform could be easily undermined does, however, seem to cast doubt on his earlier liberalism over the issue of reform in general. The question of Gaullist participation in *pied-noir* political groups was not raised during Soustelle's time in Algeria as it would be from 1956-58, but it is significant that one of Soustelle's main contacts in 1955 was the *pied-noir* radical deputy René Mayer. That Soustelle frequently sought Mayer's advice on issues affecting the European community, and distanced himself somewhat from

⁵⁷ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 281 (28.4.1955). It is interesting that similar developments in Tunisia tended to elicit criticism from this publication.

⁵⁸ Billotte, *Le passé au futur*, p. 140

⁵⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 301 (24.9.1955)

mainstream metropolitan Gaullist activities, suggested that the development and maintenance of contacts in the *pied-noir* world, both political and military, was already emerging as a valued Gaullist strategy through which to turn the situation in Algeria to their advantage.

Gaullism in Domestic Politics: New Strategies, Priorities and Divisions

The strategy of prioritising Algeria, as practised by Soustelle, was mirrored to some extent by the Gaullists' activities in domestic politics during 1955. They seized opportunities to use the crisis in Algeria as an explanation for the problems that they had already identified in France, and began to make use of a discourse of coming crisis and Gaullist solution in their parliamentary behaviour. The first metropolitan impact of the conflict in Algeria to attract the Gaullists' attention was that of the Algerian population in France. Opinion was divided as to whether this represented a problem or an opportunity for France. For Dronne, the best way to address the situation in Algeria was via metropolitan France, most of the nationalists having been recruited and trained among the Algerian community in France.⁶⁰ Foccart, too, saw a potentially serious problem in Algerian circles in the metropole, reporting that the MTLN was exerting considerable financial pressure on Algerians in France and extracting contributions from Algerian businesses through threats of violence.⁶¹ Welcoming the government's decision, in June 1955, to create a *Comité d'Action* – which included generals Juin and Guillaume and former Governor-General Naegelen, to deal with the Algerian problem – Foccart stressed that the committee must be able to address problems not only in Algeria, but also in France, where unrest among North Africans was a growing problem.⁶² The fact that support for the Algerian rebellion clearly existed among Algerians in France did not, however, lead to calls for repression in France too. On the contrary, argued Foccart, it was a sign that France had failed to fulfil its mission of development in Algeria. The problems

⁶⁰ Dronne, *AN*, 10.12.1954, *JORF*

⁶¹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 283 (12.5.1955)

⁶² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 286 (2.6.1955)

posed by mass immigration would therefore only be solved by the admission, on the part of the French authorities, that Algeria was under-developed and unable to support its population, and by a serious commitment to rectifying the situation.⁶³ The problem of nationalism among Algerians in France was therefore blamed upon the failings of the authorities, allowing the Gaullists to denounce nationalist activity in France while attaching some of the blame to the government. The Gaullists' search for any way of attacking the government did not, however, prevent Foccart from welcoming the announcement of considerable expenditure on accommodation for Algerian workers in France to distance them from the *bidonvilles* that bred discontent.⁶⁴

The Gaullists took advantage of any symbols in the metropole of the consequences of the government's failure to define a clear Algerian policy. Thus, even though they supported the increase in troop numbers, they sympathised with the protests among *rappelés* and conscripts called up to serve in Algeria. These protests, it was claimed, were an example of the government's inability to communicate to the population the absolute importance of defeating the rebellion.⁶⁵ Likewise, and more importantly for most Gaullists, the crisis in Algeria provided an ideal opportunity to resurrect the issue of constitutional reform. The RS made it clear that their support for Soustelle should not be taken to imply that they had dropped their opposition to any Fourth Republic government that refused to consider reform of the constitution. The 1956 election campaign saw the RS once again reaffirm that constitutional reform was an absolute necessity, without which meaningful, long-term, change in Algeria could not be envisaged.⁶⁶ The calls for change in the constitution were accompanied, as before, by warnings of impending crisis; the events in Algeria reawakened this recurring theme of Gaullist discourse. The activities of Soustelle in Algeria were

⁶³ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 273 (3.3.1955)

⁶⁴ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 296 (4.8.1955)

⁶⁵ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 303 (13.10.1955); *La Nation Républicaine et Sociale*, 240 (1.10.1955)

⁶⁶ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 304 (20.10.1955) & 320 (9.2.1956); Chevrillon, pp. 266-73

presented, in this context, as an example for the metropole to follow, as he had, according to the RS, prevented crisis there by embarking upon a programme of regeneration.⁶⁷ The familiar theme of France's salvation coming from North Africa, present in Gaullist thinking since 1943 and particularly influential in 1956-58, therefore reappeared, with the RS attempting to present Soustelle's Algeria as an example for the whole nation. That Soustelle had not convinced the entire nation that his Algerian policy was likely to end the rebellion undermined the Gaullists' chances of winning over public opinion with this argument in 1955.

The 1956 elections, held against a background of general disillusionment with parliamentary politics, provided further opportunities to issue warnings of the fate to which the regime was leading the nation. The RS had already made clear, in December 1955, that the essential issues of the campaign were Algeria and European integration, with the constitutional question bound up with both of these.⁶⁸ Foccart claimed to see the multitude of problems that the new government would have to face as a sign that the final crisis had arrived:

Le régime, de dégradation en dégradation, conduira la France à l'aventure. Il se pourrait bien que ce temps soit arrivé. Il se pourrait bien que les échéances qu'il va falloir affronter – sociales, financières, monétaires – et les problèmes nord-africains ... précipitent le pays vers une suite de crises de portée historique.⁶⁹

In addition to the overwhelming problems, the popular sense of crisis – as demonstrated by the strength of the right-wing populist Poujadist movement⁷⁰ – risked bringing about the return to government of the communists. Thus, another familiar Gaullist theme – the ever-present communist danger – also reappeared around the time of the 1956 elections. The evocation of communism also had the

⁶⁷ *La Nation Républicaine et Sociale*, 240 (1.10.1955)

⁶⁸ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 314 (29.12.1955)

⁶⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 317 (19.1.1956)

⁷⁰ The Gaullists' share of the vote fell from 21.7% in 1951 to 4.4% in 1956; their number of deputies declined from 106 to 17. The Poujadists won 11.6% of votes and 51 seats in 1956.

advantage of allowing Gaullists to remind the nation that de Gaulle had twice incarnated the resistance to communism at a time of crisis: in 1944, and with the creation of the RPF in 1947.⁷¹ The association of weak government with communist threat and crisis, and the portrayal of de Gaulle as saviour, thus re-entered Gaullist strategy from January 1956, and remained prominent until May 1958. The Gaullists had still, however, to convince the nation that the situation in Algeria did indeed constitute the regime's final crisis.

While the final evidence for crisis would not become clear until 1958, the RS did seek to exploit the phenomenon of Poujadism to this end. They were, to some extent, encouraged by the Poujadist success, seeing in it a manifestation of popular discontent:

Nos électeurs étaient pour la plupart contre le régime. Le plus grand nombre est passé chez Poujade. Je crois que le Mouvement Poujade sera un feu de paille. Nous pouvons récupérer les électeurs poujadistes si nous savons rester dans l'opposition un groupe uni et cohérent.⁷²

The RS considered, therefore, that a resolute policy of remaining in opposition and constantly attacking the regime would allow them to reap the benefits of growing popular discontent. They believed that the fact that they had a wider-ranging programme than Poujade – and, presumably, a more convincing figurehead – would leave them in a position to become a credible alternative. Discrediting Poujadism without alienating its supporters therefore became a Gaullist priority. Foccart attempted to use the situation in Algeria for this purpose by claiming that the Poujadists there were associated with *pied-noir* counter-terrorism, which clearly made them committed not to reform, like the Gaullists, but to further unrest.⁷³ The foundations of the Gaullists' policy for 1956-58, of constant opposition to the system

⁷¹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 318 (26.1.1956)

⁷² RS archives, Dronne to Frey, 4.2.1956, quoted in Tümmers, p. 186

⁷³ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 318 (26.1.1956)

while proposing a series of possible solutions to the Algerian crisis and convincing public opinion of its crucial importance for the future direction of France, were thus laid around the time of the 1956 elections.

The largest single obstacle to the Gaullists' efforts to win support for their views on Algeria and the regime might be said to have been their apparent inability, at times, to present a united front. The key problem, in this respect, was that of participation in government; by the time of the 1956 elections, the extent of discontent among members with the leadership's interest in accepting ministerial posts was becoming clear. The first signs of Gaullist division over North Africa, however, can be found in the public statements of certain deputies. Raymond Dronne, who had already found fault with Fouchet's Moroccan and Tunisian policies, responded to the Algerian problem in a similar manner, criticising Fouchet for not having the creation of a true 'union franco-musulmane' at heart.⁷⁴ That Fouchet was not directly responsible for Algeria did not make him immune to such criticism, as the more conservative Gaullists like Dronne were convinced that a major cause of the rebellion in Algeria was the government's willingness to contemplate reduction of French authority in Morocco and Tunisia. Throughout the early stages of the war in Algeria, the Gaullist movement suffered from a failure to assert sufficient authority to unite moderates like Fouchet and conservatives like Dronne. Deputies expressed confusion as to how much freedom they had within the group to divulge their own opinions on the situation in Algeria; the subject was raised in June 1955 at a meeting of Gaullist deputies and senators by the deputy Michel Habib-Deloncle, who wanted the leadership to explain: 'dans quelle mesure nous sommes libres d'avoir une opinion personnelle'.⁷⁵ No answer appears to have been forthcoming, other than a vague reassertion that the policies of the 1944 Brazzaville conference remained a guide as

⁷⁴ Dronne, *AN*, 10.12.1954, *JORF*

⁷⁵ RPF archives, Algérie, BR.624, quoted in F. Barthélémy, *Le Gaullisme et l'Algérie au temps du RPF (1947-1955)* (unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1997), p. 105

far as the *Union française* in general was concerned,⁷⁶ and Foccart's assertion that, on Algerian affairs, 'notre position, c'est celle de Soustelle'.⁷⁷ Such responses to a question that preoccupied many Gaullists did not ensure complete unity; the situation in this respect was exacerbated by the fact that the RS were unable to replicate the RPF's comprehensive network of local organisations all linked to the central leadership.

With many local Gaullist federations preferring to remain outside the RS structure after the demise of the parliamentary RPF, it is questionable to what extent the RS leaders' statement can be said to fully represent the diversity of views within Gaullism. In the 1956 elections, some federations went as far as to present candidates without using the RS name, for fear that ex-RPF members would not support them. With the RPF to all intents and purposes defunct, however, it is equally difficult to speak of a coherent body of alternative Gaullist opinion.⁷⁸ The question of leadership was as problematic as that of unity; Chaban-Delmas is generally acknowledged to have been the RS leader, but it has been suggested that this owed less to universal approval – he was the strongest advocate of participation in government – than to the absence of Debré and Soustelle from Gaullist activities during 1955.⁷⁹ Even in their absence, however, Soustelle and Debré laid claim to the intellectual leadership of the movement, acquired popularity among the ordinary members, and underlined the RS' credentials as the legitimate heirs of the RPF.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Barthélémy, pp. 108-9

⁷⁷ RPF archives, Algérie, BR645, Foccart to Boyer de Latour, 12.3.1955

⁷⁸ The question is further complicated by the fact that some RS deputies in fact welcomed the relative lack of discipline compared to the RPF. In some departments, the former RPF federations simply refused to be associated with the RS, though the RPF continued to exist only in name in these regions; no alternative Gaullist organisation took root. In 1958, however, many of these 'latent' Gaullists who had preferred the RPF to the RS were brought back into the fold, largely because of the re-appearance of key RPF figures like Debré and Soustelle at the head of Gaullism. On specific cases of dissent and disunity, see Chevrillon, pp. 92, 165, 250; Tümmers, pp. 98-120.

⁷⁹ Chevrillon, p. 85

⁸⁰ J. Debû-Bridel, *De Gaulle contestataire* (Paris: Plon, 1970), p. 133

That the leadership of Gaullism in 1955 seemed to be divided between Chaban-Delmas, the advocate of participation in government, Soustelle, the 'semi-detached' Gaullist, and Debré, the system's fiercest opponent, highlights the importance that the question of co-operation with Fourth Republic governments held within the RS. Soustelle's appointment as Governor-General raised some doubts among Gaullists, who were concerned that one of their leading figures might be compromised by being put in an important position, with responsibility for the development of Algeria and the restoration of order, without any clear instructions from the government.⁸¹ It was feared that Soustelle might find himself handicapped by a lack of commitment in Paris, and that any resulting problems would reflect badly on the Gaullists' claims to offer a solution to the problems in North Africa. Soustelle, however, seized upon the lack of clear instructions to implement his own policies, presenting successive governments with a *fait accompli* and redefining Gaullist policy in the process. The RS did share some of this scepticism about the value of participation in government, though one member's ministerial activities met with almost universal approval: those of Gaston Palewski in the development of atomic energy, described at the June leaders' conference as 'l'instrument futur de notre puissance industrielle et aussi de notre défense militaire'.⁸² Gaullist activity in government in the name of key Gaullist notions such as French *puissance* and national security was clearly to be welcomed, even if doubts persisted over co-operation with the government's North African policies.

The overall outcome of Gaullists' work in government, by January 1956, had not totally convinced the majority of members of the merits of this policy. After the elections, with the RS once again considering entering into government – this time to retain some influence on Algerian and defence policy by moving the socialist-led coalition away from the left – envoys had to be sent out from headquarters in Paris to

⁸¹ Gaullists in Algeria were particularly concerned about this. *Journal d'Alger*, 27.1.1955

⁸² *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, numéro spécial (June 1955)

reassure the local federations that Gaullism was not being diluted or compromised by this policy of participation. The question of participation was to remain a thorn in the side of the Gaullists throughout the last two years of the Fourth Republic, not least because of the strident opposition it suffered from such luminaries as Debré and Soustelle. In the period from November 1954 to February 1956, however, leaders such as Chaban-Delmas were able to prevent any further splits over this issue, largely by ensuring that most Gaullists in government displayed their underlying opposition to the system by being willing to criticise it from within and to stage high-profile resignations such as those over Morocco in October 1955. Nonetheless, the idea that the Gaullists would be better employed campaigning for a government of *salut public* was gaining ground, and some candidates did make this their top priority in the 1956 elections.⁸³

The Algerian Crisis in International Context

As has been seen in the case of Morocco and Tunisia, the divisions and doubts that existed within Gaullism in response to the crises in North Africa and the question of electoral strategy were often hidden by a show of unity over the international implications of the colonial problems. The one aspect of Gaullist doctrine most likely to unite Gaullists was the issue of France's claim to great power status. Initial reactions to the beginning of the rebellion focused closely on this: *Paris-Jeunes*, for example, insisted that only the overseas territories could allow France to remain a world power and that that status was consequently now threatened.⁸⁴ Debré saw the problem in more concrete terms: North Africa was the guarantee of French security, and France's right to defend its security in North Africa was equally valid as the rights, acknowledged since 1945, of the USA and the USSR to maintain a network of supportive territories in the name of their own national security.⁸⁵ North Africa was, therefore, to be seen as a legitimate sphere of influence or network of friendly

⁸³ Chevrillon, pp. 266-73

⁸⁴ *Paris-Jeunes*, 37 (15.11.1954)

⁸⁵ Debré, *CR*, 24.11.1954, *JORF*

territories for France. More emotively, Fouchet warned that to lose North Africa would lead France to decadence – the very opposite of great power status.⁸⁶ General de Monsabert contributed another dimension to the Gaullist view of Algeria's importance: 'La France est en train de jouer en Afrique la dernière carte de sa valeur, non pas seulement mondiale, mais même européenne'. The argument that France could seek compensation in Europe for the loss of North Africa was thus refuted as it had been during the EDC debate, de Monsabert insisting that without French Algeria there could be no meaningful European security.⁸⁷

The crisis in Algeria, for the Gaullists, clearly called into question France's very existence as an actor on the world stage. Jacques Soustelle developed the idea that, with Algeria, France had a voice in the world, but without North Africa it was insignificant:

Le monde où nous vivons en ce milieu du XX^e siècle, et dont l'Algérie, malgré son importance, n'est qu'une petite partie, ce monde est dur et dangereux. Des forces puissantes s'y déploient et s'y affrontent, tantôt ouvertement, tantôt sous des masques diverses. Il faut choisir; ou bien l'ensemble de la France et de l'Algérie sera un des sujets de la politique mondiale ou bien il sera un de ses objets.⁸⁸

Such apocalyptic statements received official endorsement at the RS congress in November 1955, with a resolution calling for France to overcome the current *immobilisme* and return to a 'politique de grande puissance mondiale'.⁸⁹ The importance of retaining power in Algeria, according to Chaban-Delmas, went beyond the immediate geopolitical situation: it was above all a question of preserving France's *mission historique* to bring progress to the rest of the world.⁹⁰ While speeches on occasions such as party conferences must be seen as rather exaggerated

⁸⁶ Fouchet, *AN*, 12.11.1954, *JORF*. Chaban-Delmas expressed the same sentiment in parliament nearly a year later; *AN*, 13.10.1955, *JORF*

⁸⁷ de Monsabert, *AN*, 2.2.1955, *JORF*

⁸⁸ Soustelle, *Assemblée Algérienne*, 31.3.1955 (Algiers: Imprimerie officielle, 1955)

⁸⁹ Tümmers, pp. 147-8

⁹⁰ Chaban-Delmas, quoted in *Liaison*, 8 (December 1955)

and fulfilling a function of motivation as much as policy development, this reference to the traditional *mission civilisatrice* does demonstrate that concern for the international implications of any reduction of authority in Algeria tempered somewhat the RS' interest in reform.

If the chief purpose of retaining French Algeria was clear – to preserve great power status – then the nature of the threat seemed equally obvious to the Gaullists. Foreign interference was quickly identified as the source of the nationalist violence. Both Foccart and Debré immediately identified Egypt as the principal culprit, and called for action against the *La Voix des Arabes* radio broadcasts from Cairo to Algeria.⁹¹ Fouques-Duparc concurred, though he added that the poverty and hardship in Algeria made the foreign propagandists' job easy.⁹² Following on from Gaullist criticism of the United Nations' role in the protectorates, the Gaullist press also launched fierce attacks on the individual countries that were supporting the Algerian nationalists in New York, with a particularly strong denunciation of Saudi Arabia's human rights record contrasted with France's influence in Algeria.⁹³ Once the initial anger at the outbreak of violence had subsided, however, the Gaullists interrupted their attacks on foreign governments – though they returned to this theme with great vehemence in 1957-8 – and concentrated instead on emphasising the importance of Algeria to France's western allies.

The most effective way to underline Algeria's importance in a cold war context was to demonstrate the links between nationalism and communism. Debré introduced a theme that he was to develop almost incessantly over the following three years, claiming that the survival of the free world and of western civilisation depended on the French presence in Algeria, while de Monsabert, appealing to American interests, insisted that communism risked undermining French security not only in Algeria but

⁹¹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 256 (4.11.1954); Debré, *CR*, 24.11.1954, *JORF*

⁹² Fouques-Duparc, *AN*, 12.11.1954, *JORF*

⁹³ *Journal d'Alger*, 6.1.1955

also in metropolitan France.⁹⁴ These two Gaullists continued to develop themes of Algeria's importance to the West for strategic reasons throughout 1955. They failed, however, to provide clear evidence for the communist role in the uprising, beyond the links that had existed in the past between Algerian nationalist and communist parties, and Soviet aid to Egypt. The United States did express some concern about the possibility of communism reaching Algeria via Egypt, and Soviet rhetoric praised the communists' role in the uprising even though in reality they had been sidelined by the nationalists.⁹⁵ In general, though, the Gaullists' opinions about the imminent communist threat were not shared by international opinion. They therefore turned their attention to arguing that France's so-called allies were themselves contributing to the reduction of Western influence in Algeria through their own misinterpretation of the situation.

The June 1955 RS leaders' conference provided Debré with the opportunity to launch an attack on the member states of the Atlantic Alliance for their lack of solidarity over, first, Indochina and, now, Algeria. For Debré, this fact alone was a convincing argument against any closer alliances, whether in Europe or beyond.⁹⁶ Indeed, in the light of the Gaullist involvement in the French nuclear programme, the idea that a military nuclear capacity could go some way towards strengthening France's position and freedom of action within the Alliance first appeared in policy debates at the 1955 Congress.⁹⁷ Debré continued his attack on France's allies, accusing them of 'lâcheté intellectuelle' in failing to accept French assessments of the

⁹⁴ Debré, *CR*, 24.11.1954, *JORF*; de Monsabert, *AN*, 12.11.1954, *JORF*

⁹⁵ For a detailed discussion of the somewhat ambiguous nature of Soviet relationships with North African nationalism, see Y.H. Zoubir, 'The United States, the Soviet Union and Decolonization of the Maghreb, 1945-62', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31 (1995), pp. 58-84. On the strained relationship between Algerian nationalists and communists, G. Pervillé, 'La révolution algérienne et la guerre froide (1954-1962)', *Etudes Internationales*, 16 (1985), pp. 55-66.

⁹⁶ Tümmers, pp. 136-7

⁹⁷ Tümmers, pp. 145-6. The suggestion was made by Catroux, but not adopted as official policy, which indicates that the nuclear force idea was already a point of potential discord between the *Algérie française* die-hards, who saw it in later years as a distraction, and the Gaullists with more interest in international affairs in general.

conflict as a communist-inspired one.⁹⁸ Likewise, international moves towards détente with the USSR were condemned as undermining the conflict in which France was engaged in Algeria.⁹⁹ The solution to international problems, he argued, lay not in dialogue with Moscow, but rather in the extension of NATO to include areas in Africa and Asia that were under threat from communism via anticolonialism. Thus, Debré argued, France would make its own contribution to East-West détente, on a global scale. This contrasted sharply with the existing situation, in which NATO could even be said to be undermining French efforts in Algeria because of the enforced distinction between classical conventional strategy in Europe and a new form of guerrilla and psychological warfare in North Africa.¹⁰⁰ Behind these observations on the inadequacy of the international security system lay growing resentment towards other western powers for their refusal to display unconditional support for France. This resentment, frequently in the form of anti-Americanism, became a dominant feature of Gaullist rhetoric after the RS' formal adoption of motions condemning the lack of international support, and featured strongly both in Gaullist strategy in domestic politics and in their international policy until 1958 and beyond.

The Gaullists' interest in linking their foreign and defence policies with events in Algeria demonstrated that Algeria was fast becoming their absolute priority, to which reflection on any other issue was subordinated. As early as November 1954, with European affairs still uppermost in foreign policy debates in France, Debré was already arguing that from this point on, French foreign policy must never lose sight of North Africa. European policy, in particular, was now to be judged according to whether it risked weakening links with Algeria.¹⁰¹ Defence policy was to be subjected to the same test; any acceptable measures would have to avoid

⁹⁸ Tümmers, pp. 140-44

⁹⁹ Tümmers, pp. 140-44

¹⁰⁰ Tümmers, pp. 140-44

¹⁰¹ *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 6 (November 1954)

distinguishing between Europe and France's overseas interests and instead treat France, Algeria and the *Union française* as a whole.¹⁰² The trends evident in the Gaullists' anti-EDC campaign were certainly reinforced by the problems in North Africa after the defeat of the EDC. The question of adequate national defence had not been resolved in 1954 and would not be resolved as long as North Africa was left in a state of vulnerability.

Overall, the guiding principle of RS foreign policy from November 1955 was to be the defence of the French position in North Africa.¹⁰³ Along with a united and coherent foreign policy went the need to treat the whole of North Africa as one, just as the Egyptian instigators of pan-Arabism had been doing for years. The case for this point of view was strengthened during 1955 by increasing evidence of links between nationalists in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria – as shown by the simultaneous massacres of Europeans in Morocco and Algeria on August 20 – and by fears that, once independent, the protectorates would strongly support Algerian nationalism. While the Gaullists recognised that France could exert only limited influence on the foreign policies of independent Moroccan and Tunisian states, they argued that a single military command for the whole Maghreb and efforts to ensure that Morocco and Tunisia remained pro-French would limit the extent of foreign 'interference' in Algeria.¹⁰⁴ The same thinking was applied to the question of nationalism in a religious rather than political context, with calls for France to develop a coherent 'Muslim policy' throughout the Islamic parts of the *Union française*.¹⁰⁵ Like many Gaullist ideas, this one was never developed in detail, though there was, in 1956-58, much consideration of the question of how best to incorporate a growing Muslim population in the secular French State. As will be

¹⁰² J.P. Palewski, RS *Congrès national*, November 1955, Tümmers, pp. 144-46

¹⁰³ Debré, RS *Congrès national*, November 1955, Tümmers, pp. 140-44

¹⁰⁴ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 318 (26.1.1956)

¹⁰⁵ Muscatelli, CR, 24.11.1954, JORF

seen, Gaullist attitudes to this question ranged from serious attempts to understand Islam, to apocalyptic warnings about an imminent conflict between civilisations.

Jacques Soustelle in Algeria, 1955-56: Gaullism in Action?

Jacques Soustelle's appointment as Governor-General of Algeria, in January 1955, might be said to represent the most important official position held by a Gaullist between 1947 and 1958. That Soustelle should thus become the most prominent Gaullist was not surprising; he had, in 1952, been the only Gaullist during the Fourth Republic to seriously consider forming a government. The legacy of the friction that that episode had created within the RPF led Soustelle to emphasise, immediately upon accepting the post, that he did not intend to be seen as the representative of the *Républicains Sociaux* in Algeria.¹⁰⁶ The policies that Soustelle pursued and the contacts he made in Algeria must therefore be seen not principally as a manifestation of metropolitan Gaullism in Algeria, but rather as an important contribution to the body of Gaullist views on the subject and a source of considerable influence for Gaullist policy on Algeria in the final years of the Fourth Republic. Soustelle's relations with metropolitan Gaullism were ambiguous during his time in Algeria, and his later exile from Gaullism has obscured the issue of whether any regular contacts between the Governor-General and the RS in Paris, or de Gaulle, took place in 1955-56. Soustelle claimed, after his split with de Gaulle, that he had regularly been in contact with the General while in Algeria, while Bernard Ullmann, Soustelle's biographer, claims that no contact at all took place between the two during the year.¹⁰⁷ Both de Gaulle's published correspondence and the available archival sources from Soustelle's governorship tend to suggest that the latter interpretation is more accurate.¹⁰⁸ Soustelle certainly adopted his own policies in Algeria, notably those relating to integration, pacification and *mise en valeur*, thus exploiting a

¹⁰⁶ *L'Echo d'Alger*, 28.1.1955 & *Le Monde*, 29.1.1955

¹⁰⁷ J. Soustelle, *Vingt-huit ans de gaullisme* (2nd ed.) (Paris: J'ai lu, 1971), p. 113; Ullmann, pp. 186-7

¹⁰⁸ Such ambiguities seem likely to persist in the absence of comprehensive documentation relating to the Governor-Generals' activities in the final years of the Fourth Republic, many records having been destroyed in the May 1958 uprising in Algiers.

vacuum at the centre of the rather vague Gaullist policies on Algeria, as outlined above, and defining a set of principles that influenced metropolitan Gaullist policy in the years between Soustelle's return to Paris and May 1958.

If Soustelle cannot be said to accurately represent metropolitan Gaullism in Algeria, he also attempted to distance himself from widespread colonial ideas about the Algerian question. In April 1955, he instructed the generally conservative staff of the administration in Algiers to abandon their old colonial mindset.¹⁰⁹ This amounted to making serious efforts to treat the Muslims with respect and avoid adopting racist or dismissive attitudes. Reform-minded Gaullists in France, such as Foccart, welcomed Soustelle's attempts to move away from traditional colonialism, even going as far as to describe him as an anti-colonialist.¹¹⁰ The application of this term to Soustelle in 1956, however, reveals how much change in the colonial status quo Gaullists considered possible. Soustelle was clearly no anticolonialist in the modern sense of the term, even though his reforms were seen by many Gaullists as anticolonialist in spirit.

Soustelle's attempts to distance himself from the colonial attitudes of the administration were intended to prepare the ground for a vigorous programme of reforms. He set out the general aims of his reforms in March 1955: 'percevoir les aspirations du peuple de ce pays et ... déterminer les tâches les plus urgentes'. More specifically, Soustelle argued that Algeria needed 'progrès matériel et culturel', to be achieved in partnership with France and drawing on the wealth of the metropole.¹¹¹ Public works projects such as road building, education and irrigation were specific concerns of Soustelle, but his chief interest was in creating a sense of community between the French and the Muslims, and providing a clear display of French

¹⁰⁹ G. Adams, *The Call of Conscience: French Protestant Responses to the Algerian War, 1954-1962* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1998), p. 36

¹¹⁰ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 317 (19.1.1956)

¹¹¹ Soustelle, *Assemblée Algérienne*, 31.3.1955

commitment. Soustelle's principal concern was, therefore, with creating the structures that would allow economic development and political reconciliation, leaving the more technical aspects of reform to his staff. The framework in which all Soustelle's reforms were to be implemented was integration.

Integration was, in May 1958, the philosophy that inspired the decisive revolt against the Fourth Republic. It was the dominant strain of opinion among Gaullists in 1956-8, and quickly won much support among army officers in Algeria. Soustelle's role in creating this doctrine, which was assumed at different times to be government policy, military policy and the *pieds-noirs*' ideology of choice, merits close consideration. Soustelle's advocacy of integration in 1955 has been described as purely 'political', as opposed to the mystical quality that it had assumed for the *pieds-noirs* and the military by 1958.¹¹² This distinction is an important one, as it allows for some study of the features and aims of Soustelle's integration policies in 1955 while keeping the issue separate from the way in which integration was subsequently interpreted. For Soustelle, integration was above all a realistic policy compared to traditional colonialism or independence; its chief asset was that it respected the 'originality' or 'personnalité' of Algeria.¹¹³ Integration developed in stages during Soustelle's time in Algeria. This fact itself has led to some confusion about Soustelle's intentions in February 1955. Historians' attempts to explain and define integration have frequently taken the comprehensive social, political and economic programme outlined by Soustelle in his 1956 essay, *Aimée et souffrante Algérie*, as a true representation of what integration meant to him upon his appointment in 1955.¹¹⁴ Such interpretations have, as a result, tended to see integration as a coherent doctrine that Soustelle always intended to apply in Algeria, rather than as a gradual evolution of responses

¹¹² Y. Firestone, 'The Doctrine of Integration with France among the Europeans of Algeria, 1955-1960, *Comparative Political Studies*, 4 (1971), pp. 177-203, 183

¹¹³ Soustelle, *Aimée et souffrante Algérie* (Paris: Plon, 1956), p. 93

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Elsenhans, p. 783. In spite of his exceptionally comprehensive treatment of the economic reforms devised by Soustelle, this analysis is typical of many other, less detailed works, in that it quotes Soustelle's 1956 definition of integration as existing throughout 1955.

to an ever-worsening crisis. In the context of Gaullist policy on Algeria, integration might more usefully be seen as a set of principles and objectives that developed during 1955, in response to specific events, setbacks and opportunities. This illustrates the way in which Soustelle's close contact with Algeria allowed him to develop a clearer policy than most other Gaullists, yet distanced him somewhat from the mainstream of the Gaullist movement in France.

Soustelle went to Algeria determined to apply the Statute of 1947, in line with the views being expressed by many other Gaullists.¹¹⁵ There is no indication, however, that Soustelle shared his colleagues' confidence that the application of the Statute would be sufficient to resolve the problems in Algeria. Soustelle, at the very least, envisaged combining the political reforms of the Statute with economic reforms. Valette argues, however, that at the beginning of his mandate, Soustelle was content to adopt the existing economic reform plans outlined by Minister of the Interior François Mitterrand in November 1954; he certainly only asked for a relatively modest sum for economic reform at the time of his appointment, which does not suggest an initial commitment to the kind of bold and vigorous social and economic reform that had come to be associated with integration.¹¹⁶ Indeed, many of Soustelle's initial measures, such as public works programmes to reduce unemployment, had already been proposed by Mitterrand. Soustelle gradually set out, through 1955, to define integration as a departure from the outdated assimilation. Political reforms involved, notably, the creation of a single college electoral system and the important innovation that political equality now no longer depended upon the Muslims achieving full French *statut civil* through education, religion or other former indications of 'loyalty'.¹¹⁷ These measures constituted the first stage of Soustelle's integration, in February 1955. By May 1955, he had taken integration further, with

¹¹⁵ J. Valette, *La France et l'Afrique: l'Afrique française du Nord 1914-1962* (Paris: SEDES, 1993), pp. 303, 306-7

¹¹⁶ Valette, p. 305

¹¹⁷ Valette, p. 303; Elsenhans, p. 783

the *Plan Soustelle* for 'grande intégration'. The 'petite intégration' with which Soustelle had begun his career in Algeria had proved to be both too limited to political equality and too easily frustrated by the *pieds-noirs*.

The second phase of integration involved the suppression of the Algerian Assembly and the complete integration of the Algerians' representatives into the National Assembly in Paris. This plan, much bolder than most people had considered possible, contained the seeds of future Gaullist discontent with the commitment that integration implied.¹¹⁸ The first steps towards the implementation of this new plan were to be an intensive effort to involve Muslims in the administration of Algeria; they were expected to finally make up half of the body of *fonctionnaires*. After submitting this plan to the government in June 1955, Soustelle declared his intention of making Algeria 'une véritable province française'. It was this conception of integration, supported by the government, who extended Soustelle's mandate for a further six months, that contributed greatly to the perception of integration as symbolic of the development of a large and inclusive Franco-Algerian nation which was prominent in the demonstrations of 1958.

Soustelle's changing conceptions of integration owed little to his Gaullism or to the debate taking place during 1955 in metropolitan Gaullist circles; his evolution from a policy based on the 1947 Statute and existing economic measures to a much deeper commitment took place before the metropolitan RS had met formally to discuss policy for the 1956 elections. Soustelle was clearly operating in Algeria according to the contacts he made and events he experienced. In this context, any analysis of the

¹¹⁸ In the early years of the Fifth Republic, de Gaulle expressed his views on the impossibility of integration: 'Si nous faisons l'intégration, si tous les Arabes et Berbères d'Algérie étaient considérés comme Français, comment les empêcherait-on de venir s'installer en métropole, alors que le niveau de vie y est tellement plus élevé? Mon village ne s'appellerait plus Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, mais Colombey-les-Deux-Mosquées!'. A. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle: La France redevient la France* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), p. 52. Concerns like these were, by 1959, widespread among Gaullists, although many do not appear to have appreciated, in 1955, the extent of integration to which Soustelle was committing them.

extent to which he represented Gaullism during this period might most usefully focus on the aims that lay behind Soustelle's integration rather than the specific circumstances that influenced the development of the policy. By November 1955, Soustelle's supporters were claiming that, given sufficient support, integration might be achievable, though the coming six months would be crucial if the *pied-noir* opposition was to be overcome.¹¹⁹ The theme of calls for a show of determined support for measures to keep Algeria French was a familiar one in Fourth Republic Gaullism. It must be noted, however, that in this case those calling for support for Soustelle were not by any means all Gaullists; liberal intellectuals were probably more prominent than Soustelle's fellow Gaullists in the first half of 1955.

Given Soustelle's relative distance from Gaullists during his period in Algeria, the influence of his chosen collaborators in 1955-56 is an important factor in explaining the development of Soustelle's views, which influenced those of the Gaullists in France. Soon after his appointment, in line with his desire to distance himself from the colonial administration, Soustelle appointed a team of close associates, chosen for their expertise in Algeria and their opinions on the kind of reform that was needed. His chief advisers were Commander Vincent Monteil, a veteran of the *Affaires Indigènes* bureau of the army in Morocco, and the ethnologist Germaine Tillion. Both of these appointments reveal that, in February 1955, Soustelle's chief concern was to understand and identify not with the problems of the *pieds-noirs*, but of the Muslims. If integration was to succeed, it would have to be based on a clear appreciation of the state of the Algerian people. Tillion was especially valuable to Soustelle in this respect. She had been conducting ethnographic research in the Aurès mountains of Algeria since 1938, and had contributed to French studies of Algerian society, just as Soustelle had furthered the study of pre-colonial Mexico in his own illustrious academic career.¹²⁰ Tillion's views of the Algerian problem as essentially

¹¹⁹ Adams, p. 46

¹²⁰ Ullmann, p. 195. Tillion's Second World War experience also had much in common with Soustelle. She had belonged to the *Musée de l'Homme* Gaullist resistance group, being deported in

one of demography and under-development contributed to the development of Soustelle's view that France could maintain its position in Algeria by making sufficient investment in social and economic progress. Tillion became a central part of Soustelle's team in Algiers, with the specific responsibility for creating 'centres socio-éducatifs' to ensure the education of the Muslims, based on a similar scheme for education of the native population that Soustelle had witnessed in Mexico. In choosing Tillion as one of his closest collaborators, therefore, Soustelle sent out clear signals about the programme of social development that he intended, in February 1955, to implement in Algeria.

Vincent Monteil's appointment also revealed much about Soustelle's approach to the Algerian problem. Monteil was considered a supporter of the left, and had begun his career in Lyautey's 'indigenous affairs' section in Morocco, devoted to applying the theory of protectorate through close contacts with the population. He had subsequently served in Korea and Indochina, and had been among Fouchet's collaborators in Morocco and Tunisia. He therefore represented the ideal combination for Soustelle's work in Algeria: an expert in North Africa, Arabic-speaking and well informed about Muslim culture and politics, and at the same time aware through first-hand experience of the nature of subversive, anticolonial, guerrilla warfare that had been practised in East Asia for some years. The military tactics of the FLN were generally reckoned to be influenced by the success of the Viet Minh and inspired ideologically by both pan-Arabists and communists. Monteil was therefore, in Soustelle's eyes, ideally equipped to deal with France's opponents in Algeria. The Indochinese connection in Soustelle's team also extended to his appointment of Colonel Jean Constans, an Indochina veteran and director of Soustelle's *cabinet militaire* in 1944 while Soustelle was head of security and intelligence for the Provisional Government in Algiers.¹²¹ Constans had kept

1942. Her experience of Algeria had already led Mitterrand, as Minister of the Interior, to recognise her value and consult her about the situation in November 1954.

¹²¹ Ullmann, p. 191

Soustelle informed of the nature of the revolutionary war in Indochina, insisting on the international nature of the war and the determining role played by China. His influence on Soustelle's views of Egyptian interference in Algeria was great, especially as Monteil and Tillion tended to portray an Algerian population that could be won over by peaceful means; any failure to do so could be interpreted by Soustelle as a manifestation of the same kind of outside influence that Constans had found in Indochina. Soustelle's closest collaborators in Algeria, therefore, were not chosen for their political closeness to him or to Gaullism, but for their experience of the social, political and military situation that faced him in February 1955. In this context, the influence of Soustelle's actions in Algeria on metropolitan politics might be seen in terms of giving an important voice to those who had been frustrated with government for apparently ignoring the expertise and first-hand experience that they had to offer. This is particularly true of the *militaires* from Indochina; their feelings of discontent at government colonial policy could now be channelled into an opportunity to influence policy in Algeria and prevent further mistakes being made.

Soustelle's changing relationships with his chosen collaborators, as much as his relationship with Gaullism and with government, reveal much about the evolution of his views on the Algerian problem. A turning-point can be seen around June 1955, when some of the more liberal and progressive measures that had been proposed seemed to lose their appeal to Soustelle. The case of Monteil is instructive in this respect. His initial contacts with nationalist leaders suggested that the number of actual armed 'rebels' was small; he therefore recommended to Soustelle a political solution as in Tunisia, assuming that political reform could prevent any further recruits to the nationalist forces. Soustelle, however, convinced, like most Gaullists, that the limit of political concession had been reached in Morocco and Tunisia, responded simply that 'Algérie n'égale pas Tunisie'.¹²² Some contradiction might be seen here between the intensive political effort that integration implied and

¹²² quoted in Ullmann, p. 195

Soustelle's reluctance to contemplate a political solution to the problem of nationalist violence. Even at this early stage, the Governor-General appears not to have entertained the idea that the nationalists could play a part in the political settlement. Soustelle's own travels in Algeria had convinced him that the small nationalist forces had managed to instil such fear in the population that they would have to be defeated rather than appeased if his ambitious social reform programme was to have any chance of success.

In March 1955, Monteil arranged meetings between Soustelle and the nationalist leaders Ferhat Abbas and Ahmed Francis. Soustelle displayed some liberalism by assuring Francis that the state of emergency legislation he was urging the National Assembly to pass did not mean that nationalists would be arrested for non-violent political expression, and he indeed proceeded to release two thousand nationalists imprisoned for non-violent protest. The *pied-noir* reaction to leaked reports of this meeting was so hostile, however, that Soustelle began to distance himself from Monteil's mission to develop contacts and engage in secret negotiations with nationalists. The local administrative and judicial officials demonstrated their discontent and their capacity for obstructiveness, and Soustelle's liberal measures were already vulnerable to *pied-noir* machinations.¹²³ Monteil's reports of torture met with the same response; Soustelle's initial attempts to ensure that measures were taken to prevent it were undermined by officials who released and then quickly re-arrested nationalists. Soustelle eventually had to admit that, despite his efforts, he could not guarantee the good treatment of prisoners. Soustelle's liberal policy of contact with nationalists was being undermined by the *pieds-noirs*, to the dismay of Monteil, who, in June 1955, resigned in frustration at Soustelle's reluctance to modify his goal of integration. Monteil argued that a programme of political reform and liberalisation, leading to a federal Algeria, would prove more acceptable to his

¹²³ Ullmann, p. 198; G. Fleury, *Tuez de Gaulle: Histoire de l'attentat du Petit-Clamart* (Paris: Grasset, 1996), pp. 33-4

nationalist contacts, but Soustelle remained determined to pursue integration, despite the encouragement it offered the *pieds-noirs* and the greater nationalist opposition it inspired, which in turn obliged the Governor-General to order more vigorous military operations.¹²⁴

Germaine Tillion's project of educational centres suffered the same fate, with Soustelle's evolution, as Monteil's contacts with the nationalists. The centres lost their importance in Soustelle's programme and Tillion became isolated from the Governor-General's cabinet from June 1955.¹²⁵ Soustelle instead concentrated on a more military application of his vision of social inclusion, creating the *Sections Administratives Spécialisées* (SAS) in 1955. These were modelled on the *Affaires Indigènes* branch of the army in Morocco, and Soustelle appointed another officer with considerable Moroccan experience, General Parlange, to oversee their creation. The SAS were conceived not as part of a social reform programme – though they performed important social functions – but rather, in the context of the intensification of the military 'pacification' effort. They were to place Arabic-speaking officers among the local population, with the aim of implementing French administration on a local level – under-administration had been identified as one of the reasons for the outbreak of the rebellion – and establishing contact with the population. While part of the SAS' mission was to improve economic and social conditions, their chief role was to gather intelligence and spread counter-intelligence, while also attempting to bring Europeans and Muslims together. Thus, from the purely social and civilian function of Tillion's educational centres, Soustelle shifted his attention to a military means of integrating the Algerian population.¹²⁶ The state of emergency legislation

¹²⁴ Ullmann, p. 199; Fleury, pp. 35-6. Both Ullmann and Fleury suggest that, after resigning, Monteil presented his federal plan to de Gaulle, who approved it and spoke of a future Algerian state within a federal framework.

¹²⁵ Soustelle's successor, Robert Lacoste, eventually closed the educational centres in 1956. Ullmann, p. 199

¹²⁶ G. Mathias, *Les sections administratives spécialisées en Algérie: entre idéal et réalité (1955-1962)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998). The SAS only achieved limited success in Algeria, and indeed caused some friction between civilian and military administrators as well as between officers engaged in combat and the SAS officers.

passed in Paris in April 1955 had allowed Soustelle to give the army greater powers to intervene in civilian life; with the SAS, he attempted to enforce French control of Algeria by devolving administrative functions to the army, thereby creating a politicised officer corps that had been put to the service of integration. The effects of Soustelle's decision to enlist military support for his programme can be seen in the deep attachment of many officers to integration by the end of Soustelle's time in Algeria, which contrasted with the continuing indifference of most of the Algerians. Along with Soustelle's closer reliance on his military collaborators, he also appointed, in April 1955, a new police chief, Gaston Pontal. Pontal had previously been head of the intelligence services (*Division de la Surveillance du Territoire*) in North Africa; this may be seen as a case of Soustelle seeking to reactivate the intelligence networks from his own spell as Head of Intelligence in Algiers in 1943-44. By the summer of 1955, Soustelle's emphasis in Algeria was clearly on military and police operations, in the name of pacification and integration, with the programme of civilian social and political reform somewhat sidelined.

While Soustelle was making his mark on Algeria, he also sought to exert as much influence as possible on the government in Paris, stressing the absolute priority that should be given to the Algerian situation. Once Soustelle's initiatives were in place in Algeria, metropolitan governments were obliged to support him in the absence of any alternative policy. Thus, in June 1955, reappointing Soustelle for a further six months, Prime Minister Faure publicly praised his economic reforms and progress towards integration. Faure was at the time moving in a completely different direction over Morocco and Tunisia, but the fact that Soustelle presented him with specific projects under way in Algeria left him little room for manoeuvre.¹²⁷ Soustelle's influence on government became stronger throughout 1955. Echoing a familiar Gaullist theme, he repeatedly complained to Faure about insufficient military means and excessive toleration of criticism of Algerian policy in the metropolitan press,

¹²⁷ Valette, p. 308

thus becoming a strong voice of opposition in the months preceding the 1956 elections.¹²⁸ In December 1955, he decided that the situation in Algeria prevented the elections taking place in the Algerian *départements*, thereby strengthening the ability of the Governor-General, the administration and the army to operate in Algeria without close scrutiny from parliament in Paris. After the elections, Soustelle's influence on domestic policy-making was seen in a leaked memo to Prime Minister Guy Mollet, which revealed a full integration project, involving total political, legal and economic integration, to be realised within six months.¹²⁹ This radical plan – the closest integration yet proposed – ensured that integration remained on the domestic political agenda throughout the Mollet government even after Soustelle's departure from office. It was the first clear statement of what integration meant for metropolitan France – one hundred Algerian deputies in the National Assembly, for example – and it emphasised the extent to which Algerian and domestic politics were now interrelated. The Gaullist theme of the absolute importance of Algeria for the metropole was thus brought clearly into the national consciousness in one of Soustelle's last acts as Governor-General. He followed this by urging Mollet to outline a clear Algerian policy and implement a *loi-cadre*, two demands that were to set the tone of political debate on Algeria in Paris for the remaining years of the Fourth Republic. Soustelle's influence, exerted on Paris from a distance, extended far beyond Gaullist circles, but many of the ideas he imposed on the minds of politicians and on public opinion were recognisably Gaullist, though altered to suit the situation in Algeria.

While most of Soustelle's contacts in Algeria were with his own collaborators and with Paris, he did not entirely disregard the attempts made by Monteil to engage in meaningful relations with the Muslims. Indeed, he was convinced that the 'fait musulman' was the key to understanding the Algerian problem. In an article written

¹²⁸ Fleury, p. 43

¹²⁹ Adams, p. 48

in 1955, Soustelle emphasised that recent events in Egypt, notably the emergence of Muslim Brotherhood organisations as a political entity, meant that the study of Muslim religious and political institutions was essential to the understanding of Algeria.¹³⁰ Seeing the Algerian rebellion in the context of a pan-Arab movement, Soustelle was convinced of the need to devote considerable time to study of the emerging Islamic movements. Frequently, however, he found himself unable to convince even the moderate nationalists of the benefits of his integration plans. As has been seen, early attempts at dialogue were frustrated by nationalist suspicion of the powers available to the French authorities under the state of emergency legislation, and many of Soustelle's apparently genuine early attempts to develop partnership with Muslim leaders came to nothing.

By June 1955, Soustelle had begun to lose patience with the nationalists' violence; this shift in his opinion was largely caused by the assassination of Maurice Dupuy, a government official who worked among Muslims on programmes of improvement in living conditions in line with Soustelle's reform plans. The August 20 massacres at Philippeville definitively turned Soustelle firmly against the idea of compromise with moderate nationalists and pushed him closer to the *pieds-noirs*, but the origins of this shift can be seen as early as June 1955. Further confirmation that the nationalists were not receptive to integration or reform came in November 1955, when the Muslim deputies in the Algerian Assembly rejected his latest measures to those ends.¹³¹ Soustelle came to see the nationalists as a force that was not interested in reform but only in revolution, a fact that he generally attributed to the influence of foreign extremists. The distance between Soustelle's reforms and the nationalists' aspirations became clearer in January 1956, after the leaked integration plan won the support of the *pieds-noirs* and conservatives. The Algerian 'moderates', such as

¹³⁰ Soustelle, 'Préface', in P.J. André, *Contribution à l'étude des confréries religieuses musulmanes* (Algiers: La Maison des Livres, 1956), pp. 7-8

¹³¹ Adams, p. 44

Ferhat Abbas, now lost hope in Soustelle's ability to bring about change,¹³² and his spell in Algeria ended with only the Europeans satisfied. Gaullism in metropolitan France, by its association with Soustelle, increasingly came to be identified with the defence of settler interests in Algeria.

Soustelle's opponents were not only found among the Muslim community, although it was there that opposition to his plans was most frequently expressed. In February 1955, he might be said to have faced greater opposition from the *pieds-noirs*.

Arriving with a reputation as a liberal, which his academic career did little to deny, and already tarnished in *pied-noir* eyes by his association with de Gaulle, Soustelle was attacked as a Jew and a supporter of the Muslims. That he had been appointed by Mendès-France did little to reassure the settlers. His initial plans for reform were obstructed in the Algerian Assembly, particularly as he sought to use the so-called *petits blancs* - working class settlers - who were in regular contact with the Muslims as the vehicles for the spread of integration.¹³³ In the early stages of Soustelle's governorship, Muslim opposition was not very prominent, with the exception of the most extreme nationalists who sought to polarise the two communities in Algeria. From the summer of 1955, however, Soustelle's enemies were increasingly to be found among the moderate Muslim community and French liberals.

After the events of August and September 1955, which witnessed the escalation of violence on both sides of the conflict, Soustelle effectively became the champion of the *pieds-noirs*. Integration became their ideology, and the Governor-General remained the embodiment of their hopes until May 1958 and beyond. The massacres of August 20 were largely responsible for creating this situation. The FLN's violence was initially blamed on Soustelle's excessively tolerant policy, and the social aspects

¹³² Valette, p. 311; Adams, p. 48. Adams argues that the 'full integration' plan did not at first enjoy settler support, though it seems clear that the *pieds-noirs* were won over by the argument that integration meant the indefinite retention of the link with France.

¹³³ Adams, p. 29

of his reforms were the first casualties. In France, Koenig echoed the view, held by many *pieds-noirs*, that measure such as the 'arabisation' of education in Algeria were in fact encouraging nationalism. Soustelle concluded that only military victory would allow for the restoration of calm that his integration project required. The Governor-General underwent what Gaïti has described as 'la conversion brutale, après un séjour en Algérie, d'hommes réputés de gauche ou libéraux à la solution de force'.¹³⁴ The experience of August 1955 was instructive for the *pieds-noirs* in that it confirmed their views that negotiation could not end the rebellion. In France, it created the idea, later demonstrated by Guy Mollet's *volte-face* over Catroux's appointment when faced with settler protests on February 6, 1956, that metropolitan politicians could be profoundly affected by the crisis in Algeria.

The principal effect of the violence of August 1955 on Soustelle's policies in Algeria was to convince him of the need to intensify the military effort. In February 1955, he had ordered a policy of only limited military reprisals against nationalist forces.¹³⁵ Military discontent with these instructions was clear; officers warned Soustelle not to be optimistic about the possibility of successfully dealing with the rebellion under the present circumstances.¹³⁶ The Governor-General's attempt to persuade the Algerians of the beneficence of France, however, called for the avoidance of excessive military force. Measures to control nationalist activity were limited to those allowed under the state of emergency legislation voted in April 1955, such as restrictions on movement and limits on the press and political activity. Many of the excesses of repression carried out by sections of the army under cover of the special powers granted in Paris appear to have escaped Soustelle's knowledge initially.¹³⁷ After the events of August, however, Soustelle immediately joined those in the metropole – his fellow-Gaullists among them – in calling for the intensification of

¹³⁴ Gaïti, pp. 188-90. General Salan and Robert Lacoste also underwent this phenomenon of 'conversion' in Algeria.

¹³⁵ Gaïti, p. 186

¹³⁶ Fleury, p. 37

¹³⁷ Adams, p. 37

the pacification process. Thus, in one of the areas in which Soustelle had in February 1955 differed from many of his colleagues – the use of military force – his experience of Algeria contributed to a greater sense of the urgency and importance of eradicating the rebellion.

A second important turning-point in this respect was the so-called ‘Motion des 61’, adopted in the Algerian assembly against integration and the French military effort, in September 1955. This represented the first open rejection by the generally Francophile and moderate Algerian deputies of continuing close association between Algeria and France. Soustelle’s vision of the overwhelmingly pro-French and anti-nationalist state of Algerian opinion suffered a public setback. Soustelle, along with most Gaullists, interpreted this, however, as a sign that the Algerian people had fallen victim to a form of extremism imported from other countries, and responded with calls for intensification of the military effort. In contrast, the Muslim deputies’ rejection of integration hastened its acceptance by the *pieds-noirs* and its identification with the *Algérie française* cause. The deputies’ protest against French military methods fell on deaf ears; torture continued and intensified, and *pied-noir* self-defence groups continued to receive tacit approval from the authorities. Soustelle’s attempt at positioning himself between the nationalists and the settlers had clearly failed by the summer of 1955. As the community became polarised, just as the perpetrators of violence such as the August 20 massacres had intended, liberal *pieds-noirs* also turned against Soustelle, and from around December 1955 the Radical mayor of Algiers, Jacques Chevallier, was beginning to attract the progressive support that Soustelle had hoped to win over to the cause of integration and regeneration.¹³⁸

Negotiation and reform alone seemed to have failed by the summer of 1955; the message Soustelle took back to Paris in 1956 was that no military effort was too

¹³⁸ Adams, pp. 46-7

great to defeat those who sought to obstruct his integration project. His earlier calls for military reinforcements – including conscripts – intensified, and accusations of torture were no longer treated as sympathetically as they had been earlier in the year. The basis was laid for subsequent Gaullist attacks on all those who questioned military methods, including torture, to be condemned as anti-French defeatists. The Gaullists' belief in the vigorous pursuit of the war in Algeria, in order to make reform possible, can be seen as another consequence of the 'conversion' of Soustelle in the summer of 1955. Algeria's influence on French politics grew after August 20, 1955; Soustelle's shift from liberalism to repression was mirrored by the increasing urgency that characterised metropolitan debate over Algeria between then and May 1958. For the Gaullists, Soustelle now emerged as having a plan that could save Algeria but could not be implemented under current circumstances. The need for a government to end the rebellion, reassure the *pieds-noirs* and show sufficient commitment to serious investment in Algeria was now made abundantly clear.

CHAPTER 8

TOWARDS THE END: FEBRUARY 1956 - APRIL 1958

After Soustelle's return to France, Gaullists rarely held official positions before de Gaulle's return to power in May 1958. The period addressed in this chapter, therefore, is one in which Gaullists' views on the Algerian situation were developed primarily from a position of permanent opposition to the regime, to government, to any attempts to withdraw from Algeria, and to international involvement in the crisis. It is this two-year spell of consistent opposition – only occasionally supporting government, when it was deemed necessary to prevent any further erosion of French authority – that has earned the Gaullist movement its reputation for being little more than a force of constant opposition to the regime. While it is true that the chief characteristics of Gaullist activities in 1956-8 are a loss of hope that the Fourth Republic was capable of solving the Algerian crisis, and the emergence of a coherent doctrine arguing that only the overthrow of the regime could save French Algeria, it would be wrong to see the Gaullists of this period as merely a voice of opposition to the government. Their lack of official responsibilities – only Chaban-Delmas held high office in this period – allowed them to develop a number of reform plans for Algeria, along with a clearly defined argument against the Fourth Republic, which allowed Gaullism, in the summer of 1958, to re-emerge as a political force with a programme to implement. Among the reform plans discussed in 1956-8, the most important are constitutional and electoral reform, reflection on the nature of relations between France and Algeria, and a strong belief in the value of economic development of Algeria and, especially, the Sahara. The plans outlined in this chapter, therefore, are of importance not only for analysis of the evolution of Gaullist thought, but also for an understanding of Gaullism's platform in 1958 and of many of the aims and assumptions that lay behind the policies attempted in the early stages of the Fifth Republic. All these potential reforms, however, must be seen in the context of absolute determination to keep Algeria French; even as public opinion and the views of other political movements began to contemplate a negotiated settlement, the

Gaullists remained strong defenders of *Algérie française* throughout the final two years of the Fourth Republic.¹

Reform Plans for Algeria and the Sahara

One of the Gaullists' first areas of focus was the question of representation and constitutional relations between France and Algeria. With the introduction of the Mollet government's *loi-cadre* for Sub-Saharan Africa in 1956 giving rise to calls for a similar reform for Algeria, constitutional reform was also one of the most-debated issues relating to Algeria in parliament.² While the issue came to prominence in 1957 with the Bourguès-Manoury government's *loi-cadre* for Algeria – which would have created several self-governing territories in Algeria, eventually to be united – the Gaullists were already focusing on the question of administrative or constitutional reforms throughout 1956. For Soustelle, the most important aspect of the subject was the electoral colleges: a single electoral college composed of all Muslims and Europeans was seen as the clearest symbol of French commitment to Algeria, though it was deemed unacceptable by *pieds-noirs* and, as a result, opposed by metropolitan conservatives and many Gaullists. Soustelle, however, insisted that the single college was the only way for France to demonstrate the degree of commitment implied by integration.³

¹ The RS, at their *Conseil national* of June 1957, resolved to remain 'unanimous in their resolution inflexible de maintenir l'Algérie française ... partie intégrante de la République française', though they did also speak of Algeria being composed of autonomous regions with local decision-making powers, acknowledging the evolution of Gaullist views that had taken place through the discussions on federalism. This resolution provides a useful guide to the margin of manoeuvre likely to be available to any Gaullist proposing reform of the relations between France and Algeria. S. Bernstein, *Histoire du gaullisme* (Paris: Perrin, 2001), p. 199

² The proposed *loi-cadre* was to divide Algeria into five territories with representative assemblies and limited legislative powers, co-ordinated by a federal Assembly and Council for the whole of Algeria. The assemblies were to be elected by a single electoral college comprising all residents. Algerians would continue to be represented in the French parliament, and the Minister for Algeria would have overall authority. The chief issues of contention in France were this single college and the question of internal federalism within Algeria, which many felt risked creating the foundations of a future Algerian state. T. Oppermann, *Le problème algérien: données historiques, juridiques, politiques*, trans. by J. Lecerf (Paris: Maspero, 1961), pp. 176-87

³ Soustelle, *AN*, 5.6.1956 & 17.7.1957, *JORF*

Soustelle, by now the *pieds-noirs*' chief ally in Paris, was certainly aware of their fears of becoming an oppressed minority if a single college were introduced, but he considered the single college sufficiently important to merit a report outlining ways in which they could be reassured. He pointed out, for example, that the fact that final decision making power was to remain in Paris ought to provide sufficient guarantee that their interests would not be neglected. Furthermore, Soustelle suggested, any administrative reform in Algeria could be carried out in such a way that constituency boundaries would be redrawn to ensure that virtually all Europeans lived in European-majority areas and would therefore be governed by a local assembly of Europeans.⁴ The extent to which this apparent separation of the *pieds-noirs* from the Muslims whose rule they would not accept actually corresponded to the ideal of integration that Soustelle had set out in 1955 is questionable. Indeed, given the later proposals by his associates in the *Algérie française* camp, in 1961-2, to create a South African-style system of separation in Algeria, it is possible to see, as early as 1956, the evolution of Soustelle's ideas on relations between the two communities in Algeria towards this position that would later be adopted once the *Algérie française* cause seemed lost. Gaston Palewski appeared to echo Soustelle's views on the intractable problem of representation of the two communities within one body when he argued that:

La bonne solution semblerait donc non pas de rapprocher Français et Musulmans au sein des mêmes institutions; mais au contraire de les séparer. Ce n'est pas une communauté franco-musulmane qu'il faudrait créer, mais deux communautés, l'une française, l'autre arabe.⁵

While Palewski may simply have been reiterating publicly the ideas expressed privately by Soustelle, the fact that, at a time when debate in France centred around the question of finding ways to unite the Muslim and European communities, a

⁴ RPF archives, BR.UF45, *Dossier Soustelle sur l'Algérie*, 'Avant-Rapport sur les problèmes relatifs au futur statut de l'Algérie', 1956.

⁵ G. Palewski, 'Une politique pour l'Afrique du Nord', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, 660 (July 1956), pp. 7-17

senior Gaullist published such remarks might be seen as further evidence that the Gaullists were already turning away from integration towards a clearer position as defenders of the *pieds-noirs*' rights.

In January 1958, after the defeat of the first *loi-cadre* in parliament in November 1957, due largely to Soustelle's fierce opposition, the Gaullists reiterated their strong support for the continued separation of European and Algerian electoral colleges. Michel Debré claimed, in response to the government's argument that to remove the single college from the *loi-cadre* would frustrate the Muslims' aspirations and thus play into the hands of the nationalists, that the dual college system might actually prove the best way to ensure accurate representation of each community.⁶ Another Gaullist senator, Dubois, went further than Debré, questioning the assumption that the Muslims were in favour of a single college, claiming that Muslim opinion could not be reliably measured because of nationalist propaganda. Dubois' opposition to the dual college was, however, motivated chiefly by a desire to defend *pied-noir* interests; the single college went further than equality and was an assault on their position, which could have serious consequences: 'Si vous les déceviez [the *pieds-noirs*] définitivement, la France ne perdrait pas seulement son régime, elle se perdrait aussi'.⁷ What was at stake in the *loi-cadre*, therefore, was much more important than the effective government of Algeria; to alienate or annoy the *pieds-noirs* could undermine the entire French mission in Algeria.

Throughout the *loi-cadre* debates of 1957, it is hard to identify a coherent Gaullist position, with Gaullist responses varying from Soustelle's conviction of the need for some kind of reform to others' outright rejection of any change at all. The issue might, in addition, be seen as one which demonstrated Gaullist attitudes to the government and the regime itself; to accept the need for a *loi-cadre* might have been

⁶ Debré, *CR*, 16.1.1958, *JORF*

⁷ Debré, *CR*, 16.1.1958, *JORF*

seen as acceptance of the regime's ability to solve the Algerian problem, a position that few Gaullists were keen to be associated with. For Soustelle, however, reform was needed simply because military success had been achieved by mid-1957 and the promised French commitment must therefore follow.⁸ If it were accompanied by the election of Algerian representatives to the National Assembly that had been postponed in January 1956, it would achieve the Gaullists' aim of strengthening the links between Algeria and France.⁹ Indeed, despite evidence that integration was losing some support among Gaullists, the strongest argument advanced in favour of some kind of reform was that a *loi-cadre* would inevitably be 'intégrationniste' in spirit, a step in the right direction away from autonomy.¹⁰

Soustelle's argument that reform was needed – even though he opposed the Bourguès-Manoury government's attempts in 1957 – was challenged by some Gaullists, who felt that the government's plans were only being introduced in response to international pressure. This view was prevalent among less senior Gaullists, who might be assumed to represent mainstream Gaullist opinion; deputy René Malbrant, for example, announced that the only purpose of announcing an interest in reform could be to satisfy the United Nations.¹¹ Even the normally moderate *Lettre à l'Union Française* declared that the reform plans for Algeria were only intended to appease international opinion.¹² In response, Soustelle pointed out that the fact that a certain reform plan had been introduced to appease international opinion did not mean that it should not be taken seriously in France.¹³ Soustelle found little support, however; his fierce attacks on the government's proposals also cast some doubt on the sincerity of his appeals to Gaullists to at least consider the possibility of reform. With the Gaullists' acknowledged intellectual leader on Algerian affairs prepared to

⁸ Soustelle, *AN*, 17.7.1957, *JORF*

⁹ Soustelle, *AN*, 26.11.1957, *JORF*

¹⁰ Soustelle, *La Vérité sur l'Algérie*, 15 (Oct-Nov 1957)

¹¹ *AN*, 26.9.1957 & 30.9.1957, *JORF*

¹² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 394 (12.9.1957)

¹³ Soustelle, *AN*, 29.11.1957

bring down a government because of the wrong kind of reform, those opposed to any reform at all were certainly not alienated from Soustelle in 1957. It might be argued that the Gaullists opposed to the *loi-cadre* of 1957 were not in fact against any reform; they merely suspected that international pressure was behind this particular proposal and therefore rejected it, fearing that it would be hastily implemented and would further weaken France's position. However, the absence of any alternative proposals other than defence of the *pieds-noirs*' position tends to undermine this interpretation. The senator Abel-Durand, for example, opposed the *loi-cadre* because the Europeans, who constituted the principal economic and social force in Algeria, would be weakened by it.¹⁴ By 1958, the Gaullists claimed to be vindicated in their opposition to reform when it was reported that the *loi-cadre* was working badly in the rest of Africa, where nationalists had been encouraged and French authority weakened.¹⁵

Away from the pressure to adopt a position on the *loi-cadre* in response to government proposals, the Gaullists engaged in more general debate about relations between Algeria and France. Foccart acknowledged that the Algerian crisis was essentially the result of under-administration, and welcomed plans to divide Algeria into twelve departments, though such a scheme implied considerably less devolution of power than the *loi-cadre* and was designed to allow Algeria to be administered like metropolitan France.¹⁶ Debré shared this position, accepting the need for decentralisation – to create, he suggested, metropolitan-style 'Conseils Généraux' – but without any kind of institution that could rival the State or develop into an Algerian state mechanism.¹⁷ The constitutional option that Gaullists addressed most willingly in 1956-8, however, was that of federalism, in line with the federal character of an effective *Union française* outlined in de Gaulle's Bordeaux speech of

¹⁴ Abel-Durand, *CR*, 17.1.1958, *JORF*

¹⁵ R. Frey, *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 30 (17.2.1958)

¹⁶ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 335 (24.5.1956)

¹⁷ Debré, *CR*, 4.12.1956, *JORF*

1947 (see p. 24). Strangely, given de Gaulle's view that the *Union française* could only function effectively with a federal constitution, Soustelle argued that federalism would in fact lead to secession because of the international influence that a semi-autonomous Algeria would be subjected to.¹⁸ He explained that the situation in North Africa had changed since the time when federalism was seen as a viable option: now Algeria would have to seek financial assistance from other states if it were not fully supported by France, and both the Soviet Union and the Arab League would fill the gap left by France's loosening of ties.¹⁹ Pierre Billotte agreed, claiming that federal assemblies would be dominated by nationalists, federalism implied partition along the lines of Vietnam or Korea, which could not be achieved in Algeria because of the demographic and economic situation – the French community would have to make up a sufficiently large part of each unit for these to be viable – and the end result of federalism would be the 'écrasement politique' of the *pieds-noirs*. International opinion might be satisfied by the partition of Algeria into smaller units but, Billotte argued, the only division that might seriously be envisaged would be the creation of European and Algerian assemblies with a co-ordinating body to oversee the scheme.²⁰ Thus, federalism was rejected by Gaullists during 1956-7, being replaced either by the status quo – commitment to integration – or by the complete separation of French and Muslim communities in Algeria. Federalism could only be acceptable if it were implemented as part of a reform of the entire constitution²¹ – a project that implied both a return to the 'pure' Gaullism of 1947 and the replacement of the Fourth Republic with a new system.

¹⁸ Soustelle, speech, 'La vérité sur l'Algérie', 2.3.1956

¹⁹ RPF archives, *Dossier Soustelle*

²⁰ Billotte, 'Le subterfuge du fédéralisme interne', *Le Monde*, 21.9.1957

²¹ Soustelle, *AN*, 30.9.1957, *JORF*. The Gaullists argued that if the entire constitution were reformed, then a federal *Union française* – perhaps also including Morocco and Tunisia – could be envisaged. Otherwise, federalism in Algeria alone would only weaken French rule.

The Sahara: France's New Frontier

An important new aspect of the Gaullists' search for a means of ensuring the permanence of the French presence in Algeria, from 1956 onwards, was the potential seen in the Sahara desert. Though the Sahara's mineral wealth and economic potential had been the subject of attempted exploitation for many years – the trans-Saharan railway, for example, had been first conceived in 1860 and had reached the far south of Algeria by 1948 – it was not until 1956 that confirmation was received of the desert's vast oil and gas reserves, with the discovery of large oil deposits in the Algerian Sahara. The Sahara's resources seemed to guarantee that France would always have access to oil reserves regardless of any interruption in the flow of Middle Eastern oil to Western Europe, a situation considered possible given the West's fears about Nasser's intentions in Egypt. Indeed, France would be able to become an exporter of oil. Such excitement about the Sahara was by no means limited to the Gaullists, and it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a detailed account of the various plans for exploitation of the Sahara.²² However, the news that the Sahara desert could make a substantial economic contribution to the nation as a whole was music to the ears of those Gaullists who believed that a great national project to modernise and industrialise Algeria would prove fruitful in both economic and political terms. The Sahara's energy reserves were evidence in support of the Gaullist argument that sufficient investment by France in North Africa would be richly rewarded.

The immediate problem facing the Gaullists in relation to the Sahara was to outline exactly how its *mise en valeur* should take place. Soustelle proposed, firstly, that the Sahara be considered an integral part of the new Algeria that he envisaged.

Comparing the task facing France in Algeria and the Sahara to that undertaken by

²² On the development of the Sahara, see D. Strasser, *Réalités et promesses sahariennes* (Paris: Encyclopédie d'Outre-Mer, 1956); N. Bodington, *The Awakening Sahara* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1961); P.R. Baduel (ed.), *Enjeux sahariens* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1984); H. Elsenhans, *La Guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962. La transition d'une France à une autre. Le passage de la IV^e à la V^e République.*, trans. by V. Goupy (Paris: Publisud, 1999), pp. 221-344.

Italy in developing Sicily and the South, he called for special government funds to be created and set aside for developing new agricultural and industrial resources, beginning with large-scale irrigation projects.²³ Thus, the desert could be exploited not only for its oil reserves, but also as a new frontier territory to be made available to Algeria's fast-growing population, providing crops, industrial goods and employment. In less concrete terms, the development of the Sahara would rejuvenate France: the desert would be France's 'Far-South' just as the United States' prosperity and greatness had relied heavily on the development of the American 'far-west'.²⁴ That the Sahara's importance was political as much as economic was seen in the new vigour that the plans to develop the desert gave the Gaullists' existing interest in modernising and industrialising the whole of Algeria. In 1957, Soustelle, on behalf of his cross-party *Union Pour le Salut et le Renouveau de l'Algérie Française* (USRAF), proposed the creation of a 'pilot zone' in Algeria, in which an intensive programme of industrialisation, agricultural improvement, land reform, education and training would take place. This zone would then serve as an example both to the rest of Algeria and Africa, and to the international community, of France's capability and willingness to exploit Algeria's new-found wealth in a symbol of its commitment to incorporating Algeria into a renewed national community.²⁵ Soustelle was keen to stress the development aspect of the subject to international opinion. He argued, in the American journal *Foreign Affairs*, that thanks to the industrial potential of the Algerian Sahara, traditional agricultural practices were being replaced by modern ones and dependence on the land reduced, a process that was possible only through Algeria's association with France.²⁶ In addition, it was hoped, such clear evidence of investment and modernisation would have the further benefit of identifying the nationalists as opponents of progress.

²³ Soustelle, 'Que faire en Algérie', speech, 21.3.1956.

²⁴ Soustelle, *Le drame algérien et la décadence française: réponse à Raymond Aron* (Paris: Plon, 1957), pp. 31-4. The term 'far-south' was always used in English by the Gaullists, emphasising the comparison with the United States.

²⁵ Soustelle, 'En Algérie: démontrer le mouvement en marchant', *Journal du Parlement*, 16.5.1957

²⁶ Soustelle, 'France Looks at her Alliances', *Foreign Affairs*, 35 (1956), pp. 116-30

The Sahara's new potential also allowed the Gaullists to develop more fully the argument that the future of France itself was at stake in the struggle to retain authority in Algeria. Jacques Dauer, calling for 'economic revolution' to increase French productivity and create new wealth, employment and opportunities, argued that none of this would be possible without the development and modernisation of the whole of the *Union française* along the lines being envisaged for the Sahara. A vast internal market could be created, while North Africa's potential in terms of resources, manpower and new areas for industrialisation could be exploited to make France an international economic power.²⁷ Soustelle, meanwhile, provided detailed statistical analysis of the progress so far and the great potential in industry, agriculture and social improvement since development had begun in the rural and desert regions of Algeria.²⁸ The Gaullists, already determined to convince the metropole to make sufficient investment in Algeria, therefore welcomed the discovery of the Sahara's potential as a way to channel funds and commitment into the whole of Algeria.

While the discovery of energy reserves in the Sahara seems to have been exploited by Gaullists chiefly as a means of persuading government and industry to make the required commitment to Algeria, they did not ignore the possibilities that the oil itself represented. Soustelle called upon the government to immediately extend the remit of the national electricity and gas suppliers to cover Algeria, where much of the early exploration had been undertaken by private French interests or foreign oil companies.²⁹ A year later, he argued for the first time that, rather than being a financial burden, as advocates of withdrawal insisted (see p. 158), Algeria was in a

²⁷ J. Dauer & M. Rodet, 'La France et Plus de Justice', *Cahiers du Télégramme de Paris* (March 1956)

²⁸ Soustelle, *La vérité sur l'Algérie*, 7 (1-15.1.1957)

²⁹ Soustelle, *AN*, 9.3.1956, *JORF*. The French government did already have a stake in the exploration under way in the Sahara, thanks to the *Bureau des Recherches du Pétrole*, established in 1945. Soustelle, however, saw the involvement of *Electricité de France* and *Gaz de France* as potent symbols of the national project in Algeria.

position to benefit France economically, and would eventually provide two thirds of national energy needs by 1969.³⁰ With the cost of energy thus driven down by a domestic abundance, France would be relieved of the financial burden that was currently preventing it from achieving great power status because of the extent of borrowing undertaken since 1945. Even the debt incurred in the Algerian War would, by this logic, be justified by the economic potential of the Sahara. Financial independence would clearly bring political independence from the United States and would allow France the Gaullists' cherished international freedom of action. The development of the Sahara also came into contact with the Gaullists' international political concerns in terms of the seemingly simple matter of how to get the oil and gas from the desert to the coast. The spectre of international 'interference' – presumably from the Arab League countries – troubled Foccart to the extent that he considered that, by 1958, the Sahara had become essentially a political rather than an economic question.³¹

That the Sahara had become a political matter for the Gaullists rather than a purely economic one was hardly surprising; hardly any subject, in 1956-8, failed to provide an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits that could be gained from a more coherent and committed political approach to the nation's problems. The Sahara mirrored the rest of Algeria in that its effective development called for the creation of an efficient system of political administration. The government created, in January 1957, the *Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes* (OCRS), a body that de Gaulle retained under the Fifth Republic. During the discussion on the political status of the Sahara – a subject that was to feature prominently in the Algerian independence negotiations of 1961-2 – the Gaullists showed some of the same concerns as had been evident over the *loi-cadre* and the earlier case of the protectorates. Soustelle was particularly concerned that the OCRS proposal would separate the southern

³⁰ Soustelle, *AN*, 21.3.1957, *JORF*

³¹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 410 (10.1.1958)

territories of Algeria from the rest of the country, attaching them to the new Sahara territory that would also include the northern parts of the Black African colonies.³² Given the FLN's belated interest in the Sahara as a front in the war,³³ and the extensive political and military powers to be held by each region's *Délégué Général*, it was feared that both administration and military operations in Algeria might be complicated by this geographical division. Soustelle's preferred plan was to retain the geographical unity of Algeria, but to create departments in the Sahara, as had initially been proposed in 1947.³⁴ Palewski agreed, saying that unification of the Sahara would benefit Algeria and it should therefore be given its own statute and administered by France as a part of the metropole or the *Union française*.³⁵ Thus the Sahara was to be treated as a geographical whole, just as the Gaullists had called for a single military command for the whole of the Maghreb before the independence of Morocco and Tunisia. Division of North Africa into smaller units tended, according to Gaullists, to lead to under-administration and to encourage the nationalists.³⁶ In particular, the danger of political internationalisation was to be avoided; agreements must be reached with Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania regarding the precise frontiers and rights of those states, while other countries' interests were to be restricted to rights of passage and trade.³⁷

The Sahara contributed an added dimension to the Gaullists' defence of Algeria in the name of France's future and greatness. Foccart saw the desert as France's great

³² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 360 (20.12.1956)

³³ On the extension of the war to the Sahara, S. Chikh, 'L'enjeu saharien dans la guerre d'Algérie', in Baduel (ed.), *Enjeux sahariens*, pp. 95-7

³⁴ Soustelle, *AN*, 13.12.1956, *JORF*

³⁵ G. Palewski, 'Perspectives sahariennes', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, 663 (December 1956), pp. 345-60

³⁶ Michel Debré later complained that to divide the Sahara into different territories would create a situation like that in the Middle East. Debré, 'Mauvais départ au Sahara', *Courrier de la Colère*, 7 (4.1.1958)

³⁷ G. Palewski, 'Perspectives sahariennes', pp. 355-8. In March 1958, the Gaillard government's proposal to co-operate with Morocco and Tunisia in exploitation of the Sahara was rejected by the Gaullists, not least because the former protectorates could sell their share of the energy concerns to foreign interests, most likely the United States. *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 419 (13.3.1958)

new chance and described those working on its development as pioneers, issuing a challenge to the nation to seize this opportunity:

La France est-elle à la hauteur des destinées nouvelles que le Sahara lui offre? La réponse de l'histoire à cette question dépend du peuple français lui-même - selon qu'il aura ou non laissé le régime gaspiller la chance évoquée par le général de Gaulle.³⁸

In addition to the economic prospects offered by the Sahara, the Gaullists also stressed its strategic importance, further contributing to the image of a strong and independent France emerging from correct exploitation of the Sahara. Palewski envisaged a mobile rapid intervention force for the whole of Africa, based in the Sahara, to ensure the security of French interests, an idea that was implemented under the Fifth Republic. The other obvious beneficiary of the Sahara's resources would be the nuclear energy programme; the required mineral resources were to be found in the Sahara and sub-Saharan Africa, and the desert would provide an ideal test site.³⁹ In terms of the Sahara's strategic value, the Gaullists' views coincided with those of many in the military, who had been interested in its potential for heavy industry, communications and as a military base since the early 1950s. General Catroux was a frequent contributor to debates on the subject in the military press, along with the Sahara's chief advocate in military circles, Admiral Raoul Castex, who shared the Gaullists' conviction about the crucial importance played by Africa in France's war effort and the lessons to be learned in terms of France's vital military and geopolitical interests.⁴⁰ Catroux, however, added a note of caution to the enthusiasm about the Sahara's potential, warning as early as June 1952 that France

³⁸ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 374 (28.3.1957)

³⁹ Palewski, 'Perspectives sahariennes', pp. 359-60

⁴⁰ Castex first outlined his views on the potential usefulness of the Sahara in the *Revue de Défense Nationale* in May 1952, with Catroux becoming involved in the discussion shortly afterwards, displaying once again the cross-fertilisation of military and Gaullist ideas. Though Castex was never officially associated with the Gaullist movement, his interest in the Sahara is only one aspect of his career that makes him typical of the kind of officers that Gaullist ideas appealed to. Removed from his post by Darlan during the Second World War, he was one of the first military advocates of the nuclear force, an associate of Juin and strong advocate of the so-called 'lâchons l'Asie, gardons l'Afrique' school of thought around the time of the Indochina War.

might come into conflict with Moroccan ambitions in the region, in which the frontiers were still disputed, having never been clearly identified at the time of the French conquest of Morocco.⁴¹ The increasing antagonism between France and Morocco in 1956-8, as will be seen below, corresponded to Catroux's warning of the potential problems facing French ambitions.

The Military Situation in Algeria

The Gaullists' interest in reform and development between 1956 and 1958 did not in any way imply a reduction of their interest in the military operations. Indeed, given that the revolt of May 1958 would have been inconceivable without military support, it is particularly important to analyse the Gaullists' views on matters affecting the conduct of the military effort during the period preceding 1958. Moreover, the Gaullists had declared their support for the Mollet government's policy of insisting upon a cease-fire before elections or negotiations could take place in Algeria. The only acceptable outcome of the war, therefore, was complete military victory that would allow France to implement reforms from a position of authority. As will be seen later in this chapter, international events frequently hampered the French military's efforts to achieve control of the situation in Algeria. In terms of operations and strategy, however, the Gaullists were not alone in believing that the war could easily be won provided the necessary effort were shown by civilian authorities.

Debates on the military effort in 1956 were dominated by the questions of the use of conscripts and the deployment of specialist troops and equipment. While these may appear to be two different responses to the problem – the use of large numbers of additional if relatively unprepared troops, compared to a more focused tactical approach – they were seen as largely complementary. Greater troop numbers were required, it was argued, in order to maintain order throughout Algeria and implement

⁴¹ Gen. J. Charbonneau, 'Existe-t-il vraiment une querelle du Sahara?', *Revue de Défense Nationale*, 8 (1952), pp. 693-714.

the 'pacification' programme, while a decisive advantage could be gained by the involvement of troops with knowledge of guerrilla tactics – generally Indochina veterans – or the ability to use new equipment such as helicopters. The Gaullist deputy Frédéric-Dupont, a member of the National Assembly's Defence Commission, returned from an official visit to Algeria in March 1956 recommending a more focused use of manpower, suggesting, for example, that certain officers should receive specialised anti-guerrilla and psychological warfare training while others should be deployed solely in operations among the population.⁴² His views certainly mirrored those of the military hierarchy; training manuals for so-called psychological warfare were produced in great numbers in the years following the defeat in Indochina. Koenig, indeed, warned of a 'second Indochina' if specialist troops suited to guerrilla warfare were not immediately deployed in Algeria.⁴³ Many of the young officers involved in the events of May 1958 and the army's later rebellions against de Gaulle's Algerian policy were instrumental in the development of the new psychological action. The relationship between 'psychological', or 'revolutionary', warfare and Gaullism, however, is not as close as this might suggest. Few, if any, of the officers in Algeria were Gaullists, and psychological warfare had its disciples among all political movements in France, as well as being opposed by figures on all sides who preferred to overwhelm the FLN with more traditional military methods rather than attempting to match their guerrilla tactics.

⁴² Frédéric-Dupont, *AN*, 31.3.1956, *JORF*. Psychological warfare, inspired by the theory of 'revolutionary warfare' that officers had been exposed to in Indochina, held that the soldier must move freely among the people to spread propaganda and achieve total control of not only the territory but also its civilian population. In Algeria, it aimed to create a parallel organisation to the FLN's cells in every area, spreading the French doctrines of integration and progress in response to nationalists' propaganda. On the doctrine of psychological or revolutionary warfare, see P. Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria: The analysis of a political and military doctrine* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964); M. Faivre, *Le général Paul Ely et la politique de défense (1956-1961)* (Paris: Economica/Institut de Stratégie Comparée, 1998), pp. 12-16; P. Ely, *L'armée dans la nation* (Paris: Fayard, 1961); R. Girardet, *La crise militaire française* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1964); G. Kelly, *Lost Soldiers: the French Army and Empire in Crisis, 1947-1962* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965); Elsenhans, pp. 530-51

⁴³ Koenig, *AN*, 9.3.1956, *JORF*

The army's *Service d'Action Psychologique et d'Information* was created in May 1956 and the *cinquième bureau* – the division charged with organising large-scale psychological warfare once the doctrines had been established – in November 1957. Gaullists were therefore not directly responsible for this new direction, but Chaban-Delmas, as Defence Minister in 1958, certainly encouraged the advocates of revolutionary warfare, finding these younger officers more encouraging than the ageing command.⁴⁴ If actual Gaullist participation in the creation of psychological warfare is hard to identify, it is more clear that many of the ideas behind the army's adoption of psychological warfare had much in common with the Gaullist world-view in the late 1950s. Psychological warfare contended that a communist offensive would be launched via anticolonial movements rather than on the East-West divide in Europe, and that the real defence of the West was best undertaken by undermining nationalist movements like the FLN. The Gaullists' growing conviction that NATO and France's western allies were proving to be of little help in Algeria was therefore reinforced by the military's assessment of the geopolitical significance of the Algerian War.⁴⁵ Moreover, in need of a doctrine with which to oppose independence, the psychological warfare officers embraced integration, preparing propaganda material to demonstrate to the Algerians the benefits of full integration into a greater France. Even the means used to implement the policy in Algeria owed much to Gaullism, or at least to Jacques Soustelle – the SAS were increasingly transformed into propaganda units working among the Muslims who had been rounded up into newly constructed camps and villages as part of the 'scorched earth' policy being used against nationalist forces.

⁴⁴ J. Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires pour demain* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997). Chaban became frustrated by the high command's apparent reluctance to embrace new ideas, and supported the young officers who, through their creation of a new ideology and strategy, seemed to offer a solution to the army's problems of *immobilisme*, low morale and detachment from the nation. Thus, despite the Gaullists' future conflict with the advocates of revolutionary warfare, their Minister of Defence showed no signs of concern about these officers' activities before May 1958.

⁴⁵ The military's conviction that what was under way in Algeria was essentially a Soviet attempt to encircle the West was most clearly expressed by General Jacques Allard in a speech at Supreme Headquarters of Allied Planning Europe (SHAPE) in 1957, published in the *Revue de Défense Nationale* and adopted enthusiastically by the advocates of psychological warfare. J. Allard, 'L'OTAN et l'Afrique du Nord', *Revue de Défense Nationale*, 14 (1958), pp. 907-11

Along with psychological warfare, the second major change in military operations in 1956-8 was the extension of police powers to the army, and the placing of the military command in civilian control of Algiers. The Battle of Algiers, in 1957, gave rise to many allegations of torture arising from the new military responsibilities.⁴⁶ While the issue of torture divided Gaullists later in 1957, initial responses to the new, more vigorous military operations were positive, with Jacques Foccart, for example, praising the army's new found efficiency in February 1957.⁴⁷ The Gaullists' support for new military methods was matched by their calls for an increase in troop numbers in Algeria. This was to be achieved not only by diverting troops from Europe – which had been begun by Koenig while Defence Minister in 1955 – but also by recalling reservists, deploying conscripts and extending the length of national service. All of these measures, which met with opposition in parliament and in public opinion, became a test of the government's resolve, as it was by now widely believed that the defeat in Indochina had been the result of a lack of political will, notably a refusal to use conscripts in a colonial war.⁴⁸ Frédéric-Dupont called for the government to extend the length of service to two years,⁴⁹ while Foccart welcomed what he perceived as growing public support for those recalled to serve in Algeria in 1956, thus involving the nation as a whole in the effort.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ The relationship between revolutionary warfare and torture is close; it was argued that torture represented a legitimate means of retaliating against terrorism, while the element of psychological conditioning already present in the revolutionary warfare tactics learned in Indochina was easily adapted to an institutionalised form of torture. On torture, see Maran, Rita, *Torture: the role of ideology in the French-Algerian War* (New York & London: Praeger, 1989); R. Branche, *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), and General Massu's defence of the methods used during the Battle of Algiers: J. Massu, *La vraie bataille d'Alger* (Paris: Plon, 1971), in addition to many recently published memoirs by both victims of and participants in torture.

⁴⁷ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 370 (28.2.1957)

⁴⁸ On the importance of Indochina as a precedent and test of government resolve, see M. Alexander, 'Duty, Discipline and Authority: The French Officer Elites Between Professionalism and Politics', in *The Right in France: 1789-1996*, ed. by N. Atkin & F. Tallett (London: Taurus, 1997), pp. 129-59

⁴⁹ Frédéric-Dupont, *AN*, 31.3.1956, *JORF*

⁵⁰ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 340 (28.6.1956)

Likewise, Gaullists condemned subsequent moves, caused by financial problems, to reduce the length of service,⁵¹ though on this matter some difference can be seen, in 1958, between the activists' views and those of Defence Minister Chaban-Delmas. Chaban insisted that troop numbers were sufficient and what was needed was not more costly reinforcements but rather efforts to improve the morale of those already in Algeria.⁵² There was agreement, however, on the need for a greater effort and greater support for military operations. Soustelle berated the government for failing to make clear that the war in Algeria was not, as the official language maintained, an 'opération de police', or just 'une quelconque guerre coloniale'.⁵³ In this respect, Soustelle appears to have recognised the need to describe the problem as a war, something successive governments had refused to do. His views also closely resemble those of the military; General Paul Ely, for example, an officer with closer Gaullist connections than many of his colleagues, insisted on the need to develop the concept of 'L'armée dans la nation',⁵⁴ identifying the population as a whole with the war effort.

Practical measures to ensure that the army had sufficient troops and the correct doctrine and tactics were accompanied by efforts to raise its morale. Echoing Koenig's earlier concern for the army's morale in Indochina, Morocco and Tunisia (see p. 120), Soustelle warned the government to be attentive to the morale of the troops in Algeria, while Michelet pointed out that the army had been badly treated by government for some time and success in Algeria would depend on sufficient civil-military co-operation, warning that the army was likely to revolt if it did not receive sufficient support.⁵⁵ Demonstrating support for the army against the government, the Gaullists enthusiastically took up the case of Captain Moureau, who had been

⁵¹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 414 (6.2.1958)

⁵² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 423 (10.4.1958)

⁵³ Soustelle, *AN*, 9.3.1956, *JORF*

⁵⁴ M. Faivre, *Le Général Paul Ely et la politique de défense*. Ely was Chief of the General Staff, and resigned temporarily in May 1958 to avoid being compromised by his Gaullist connections. De Gaulle subsequently restored him to his former post.

⁵⁵ Soustelle, *AN*, 5.6.1956, *JORF*; E. Michelet, *Contre la guerre civile* (Paris: Plon, 1957), pp. 46-53

captured by Moroccan guerrillas in June 1956, tortured and assassinated. Foccart called for veterans in France to stage a protest in solidarity with Captain Moureau, in frustration at the government's perceived failure to react vigorously enough.⁵⁶ The metropolitan campaign against the alleged torture taking place in Algeria also received little support from most Gaullists: Soustelle's attack on those in parliament and the press condemning French torture but not Algerian 'terrorism' was typical of Gaullist responses to the question of torture.⁵⁷ In general, the issue of torture itself was not debated in great detail by Gaullists, but rather incorporated into their attacks on the Left, intellectuals and the 'defeatist' press, whose willingness to support campaigns in favour of those tortured in Algeria amounted to betrayal of the army. Some Gaullists did openly condemn torture – notably those who had suffered deportation during the Second World War such as Edmond Michelet, or colonial moderates such as Georges Catroux – and this fact may explain why the issue was never debated formally within the Gaullist movement.⁵⁸

By early 1958, with Chaban-Delmas at the Defence Ministry, the Gaullists believed that, though there was no chance of military defeat, the army must be reassured that its role was valuable and its methods correct. The political nature of the conflict meant that those who had become involved in psychological warfare in the name of integration needed to be sure of the support of the civilian authorities. Gaullist hopes were invested in Chaban-Delmas, who would ensure that the French military superiority would not be wasted:

⁵⁶ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 372 (14.3.1957). Debré added, in 1958, that Moureau's 'martyrdom', given the government's apparent indifference, was that of the whole nation, demonstrating the way in which isolated incidents were increasingly being seen by Gaullists, in 1957-8, as symbols of a bigger picture of decline and defeatism.

⁵⁷ Soustelle, 'La porte étroite', in *Voici Pourquoi*, 1 (19.12.1957)

⁵⁸ J. Charbonnel, *Edmond Michelet* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1987), pp. 106-7. Most Gaullists' memoirs and biographies do not include any mention of torture; Debré does acknowledge that it occurred but only, he argues, because of the disappearance of state authority, thus relating the subject to the question of the state and the regime that was uppermost in most Gaullists' minds in 1957-58.

La présence de Jacques Chaban-Delmas à la tête de notre défense nationale est pour nous le meilleur garant de notre détermination. Alors pourra intervenir la solution politique indispensable si nous voulons affirmer une fois pour toutes le principe de la présence française en Algérie.⁵⁹

By the beginning of 1958, therefore, the Gaullists' views on the military effort in Algeria were generally positive. The campaigns of 1954-7 in favour of greater commitment, increased troop numbers and more effective methods of eradicating guerrillas and winning over the population appeared to have succeeded.

The New Enemy: Internationalisation

That the war was being won in Algeria was in little doubt; one factor remained, however, that risked undermining the French army's operations: the increasing support offered by Morocco and Tunisia to the ALN. Tunisia was considered more troublesome than Morocco in this respect. President Habib Bourguiba was keen to take the Algerian case to the United Nations at every opportunity and publicly criticised France's military operations. In March 1957, he proposed that a solution might be found in the form of a Maghreb federation, a proposal that was rejected by both the French and the Algerians. Throughout 1957, he attempted to instigate negotiations, but, in the face of continued French refusals, became increasingly sympathetic to the Algerian nationalists. Mohammed V of Morocco was less directly associated with the Algerian nationalist cause, though he too became frustrated at continuing French refusals of any attempt to negotiate or find a solution embracing the whole region.

This element of the war carried the additional problem of internationalisation. In attempting to deal with the behaviour of two independent states, France risked opening up the Algerian problem – which it felt was coming under control – to international involvement that, the Gaullists believed, could only weaken France's

⁵⁹ *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 28 (Jan. 1958)

position and undermine the efforts already made. They repeatedly called upon the government to ensure that Morocco and Tunisia were not able to pose a threat to French interests. The protectorates were suspected of providing bases and training facilities for Algerian nationalist forces, or at least of turning a blind eye to cross-border contacts, and of allowing arms from Egypt and the Soviet bloc destined for Algeria to be delivered to their territory and transported across the border. In 1957, the French army began to construct the Morice line – a Maginot Line-style barrier – on the Algerian-Tunisian border. In January 1958, however, the situation began to deteriorate rapidly when a French border patrol was ambushed and a plane shot down, in both cases by Algerian troops operating from the Tunisian side of the border. In February, the French retaliation led to the bombing of the Tunisian village of Sakiet, with the civilian loss of life ensuring international condemnation and Bourguiba's final decision to condemn France at the UN and invite American and British moderation. The internationalisation and humiliation that followed for France can be seen as the first of the series of events that brought down the Fourth Republic. The Gaullists had some involvement in these events through the presence of Chaban-Delmas as Minister of Defence; their response will be examined in more detail in this section. Their frustration with Morocco and, especially, Tunisia, however, dated back almost to the protectorates' independence in March 1956.

The Gaullists consistently urged the government to prevent military incursions from the former protectorates into Algeria and to exert diplomatic pressure to stop Moroccan and Tunisian support for the ALN. Raymond Triboulet, perhaps overestimating France's capacity for action two months after Moroccan and Tunisian independence, stressed that: 'Il faut rétablir la situation au Maroc. C'est un élément essentiel du salut de l'Afrique du Nord, donc du salut de la France'.⁶⁰ The only grounds for believing that France could still exert sufficient influence in Morocco were the independence treaties, which had spoken of interdependence and granted

⁶⁰ Triboulet, *AN*, 12.7.1956, *JORF*

France certain military rights, notably the important naval base at Bizerta in Tunisia. If Morocco and Tunisia would not co-operate with France, Debré suggested, the French government should put more pressure on their governments; French financial aid should be made conditional on the protectorates' supporting France at the UN in discussion of the Algerian question.⁶¹ In addition, the army's request for a 'droit de poursuite' to follow ALN troops into Tunisia should be granted, and Franco-Tunisian relations should be made subject to the demands of Algerian policy.⁶² In response to the Bourgès-Manoury government's position that relations with Morocco and Tunisia could not be 'normalised' until the end of the war in Algeria, Gaullists protested that only Moroccan and Tunisian interference were keeping the war going, and better relations with the former protectorates would bring an end to the Algerian rebellion.⁶³ Furthermore, Morocco and Tunisia's supposed neutrality should somehow be enforced, though Debré did not expand upon how he envisaged this might be achieved; military operations against the former protectorates were never suggested.⁶⁴

The ongoing discord between the Gaullists and the former protectorates was heightened by the moments of crisis in relations between the Maghreb states and France - the Ben Bella affair and the bombardment of Sakiet - as well as by Moroccan and Tunisian claims to the Sahara. The Ben Bella affair of October 1956 involved the French air force's intercepting of a plane carrying Algerian nationalist leader Ben Bella, at the time based in Morocco, and several associates, to a meeting in Tunis with representatives from Tunisia and Algeria. The plane was forced to land in Algeria and Ben Bella arrested. The French government appears not to have been informed in advance but approved the action retrospectively; Gaullists and other defenders of French Algeria greatly welcomed the air force's decisive action, while

⁶¹ Debû-Bridel & Debré, *CR*, 18.12.1956, *JORF*. A resolution to this effect was voted in the National Assembly in December 1957.

⁶² Debré, *CR*, 19.2.1957, *JORF*

⁶³ Bertaud, *CR*, 19.11.1957, *JORF*

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 2.4.1957, *JORF*

Bourguiba and Mohammed V became more determined to support the Algerians. Foccart immediately praised the operation, which was all the more welcome because the government had had nothing to do with it. The Gaullists could therefore continue to accuse the government of weakness and indecision while approving of an official operation.⁶⁵ Later, however, they found cause for complaint in the way in which the affair was investigated and in the lenient treatment of Ben Bella, who had been imprisoned in France and accorded the status of a political prisoner. The opening of a government commission of enquiry in May 1957 was thus criticised as a sign of weakness towards Morocco.⁶⁶

The Sakiet incident of February 1958 occurred against a background of Gaullist calls for Moroccan and Tunisian 'co-belligerence' to be treated more firmly by the French government. Arms deliveries to Morocco from Egypt and Eastern Europe discovered in October 1956 and January 1958, intended for the ALN, were seen as further proof of collaboration in the Algerian rebellion. The attacks on French forces in January 1958 led Foccart to question how much authority Bourguiba actually had over the Tunisian and Algerian forces involved. This in turn meant that the French government would be wrong to place too much confidence in maintaining good relations with Bourguiba in the search for a solution.⁶⁷ Soustelle concluded that Tunisia's role in the Algerian war was now comparable to that of China in Indochina – or rather, to that presumed by the Gaullists to have been played by China (see p. 107) – and regretted that France had not retaliated immediately after the attacks.⁶⁸ Given their dissatisfaction with Tunisian behaviour, Gaullists initially welcomed the attack on Sakiet, though Foccart expressed doubts by insisting that a definitive explanation of the incident be provided, notably relating to the non-military casualties.⁶⁹ With Chaban-Delmas as Minister of Defence, the Gaullists could not

⁶⁵ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 352 (25.10.1956)

⁶⁶ de Pontbriand, *CR*, 14.5.1957, *JORF*

⁶⁷ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 411 (16.1.1958)

⁶⁸ Soustelle, *AN*, 21.1.1958

⁶⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 415 (13.2.1958)

publicly disapprove of the operation, though they did regret that the French troops and citizens in Tunisia were now vulnerable to reprisals.⁷⁰ The international condemnation of France did not figure prominently in Gaullist reactions; the Gaullists were, by February 1958, inclined to be hostile to any international opinion on the Algerian situation. Sakiet's real importance for the Gaullists might be said to have been as a conclusive demonstration of the government's inability to act decisively – having left the military to decide upon how to use its 'droit de suite' – and of how the divisions and lack of communication in the cabinet, in response to the event, undermined France's international standing.

The International Context: France Against the World?

The Sakiet affair, and the Gaullists' subsequent fury at the government's acceptance of British and American 'good offices', provided the immediate context for the fall of the Fourth Republic and ensured that the Gaullist regime that followed it would seek to assert French freedom of action in international affairs. It was no surprise that the Gaullists should react so angrily to this eventual internationalisation of the Algerian conflict. Between 1956 and 1958 their attitudes to international relations focused on the need to keep foreign 'interference' – even from France's western allies – away from North Africa, and to convince the world that France was in Algeria not to defend an outdated colonialism but to uphold the interests of the free world against communism and Islamic nationalism. The message, therefore, remained broadly the same through this period, though the Gaullists' tone could vary from the conciliatory to the aggressively hostile according to the immediate context –

⁷⁰ Debré did attempt to distinguish between Chaban-Delmas and the rest of the government, claiming that only the Defence Minister and the Algerian Governor-General, Lacoste, could really be praised for their roles in the incident, as only they had unequivocally approved of it, albeit retrospectively. *Courrier de la Colère*, 14 (21.2.1958). Chaban-Delmas claimed later that General Salan, Commander-in-Chief in Algeria, had acted unilaterally at Sakiet, thereby forcing his hand - which appears to be accurate - and that Chaban had thus unwittingly been forced into an unequivocal *Algérie française* position, a judgement that may have more to do with Salan's subsequent fall from grace as one of the figures behind the OAS. J. Chaban-Delmas, *Mémoires pour demain* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), pp. 303-4

for example the Suez crisis – and to the slightly different perspectives of individual Gaullists.

Soustelle, perhaps surprisingly, demonstrated that the Gaullists were not necessarily hostile to all foreign opinion, insisting that the government must strive to retain the support of ‘friendly’ countries.⁷¹ Jean Bertaud, meanwhile, suggested that France might even be able to find common ground with the Soviet Union by convincing it that the enemy in Algeria was 'les emprises du fascisme égypto-arabe, dont commencent à profiter certaines individualités allemandes', appealing certainly to Russian fears of German revival and Islamic nationalism but somewhat contradicting his colleagues’ rhetoric about the communist inspiration behind anticolonial movements.⁷² Overall, however, the Gaullists focused on the harm being done to France by its alliances and by the United Nations. 1956 saw the FLN intensify its campaign at the UN for recognition of the Algerian rebellion as a war of liberation – though the US and other western nations continued to support France at this stage because of the Mollet government’s reform plans. French delegations to New York struggled, throughout 1957, to prevent the UN General Assembly from expressing support for Algerian self-determination, in the face of an increasingly widespread international view that support for anticolonialism was the only way to avoid Soviet expansion into Africa.⁷³ According to Soustelle, the UN would actually be in violation of its charter if it were to be claim the right to investigate the Algerian situation, which was a purely domestic affair.⁷⁴ Foccart continued this line of thought by claiming that even the UN vote, in February 1957, against a motion calling for Algerian self-determination represented a defeat for France, as the very fact that the debate had taken place meant the UN was now recognised as competent to deal with the Algerian affair. The French delegation could therefore only have succeeded in

⁷¹ Soustelle, *AN*, 5.6.1956, *JORF*

⁷² Bertaud, *CR*, 24.7.1956, *JORF*

⁷³ M. Thomas, 'France Accused: French North Africa Before the United Nations, 1952-1962', *Contemporary European History*, 10 (2001), pp. 91-121

⁷⁴ Soustelle, 'Pourquoi je suis à l'ONU', *La Vérité sur l'Algérie*, 7 (1.1.1957)

defending French interests by preventing a debate on Algeria from taking place, though it must be noted that France had gained little advantage from its boycott of the UN from September to November 1955 on precisely those grounds.⁷⁵ Michelet voiced clearly the Gaullist contempt for the UN, dismissing it as: 'une institution dont la principale raison d'être est la collecte du plus grand nombre possible de drapeaux, étendards et pavillons censés représenter des Etats dits "souverains" et "indépendants"', though he also envisaged that, given the right form of government, France could play a leading role in the UN to match those of the United States and Soviet Union.⁷⁶

The Western alliance continued to decline in Gaullists' estimation as the United States and other nations made their support for negotiations in Algeria increasingly clear. Soustelle warned American opinion in 1956, before the Suez affair, that in Gaullist eyes France was deriving no benefit from its alliances in either colonial affairs or Europe,⁷⁷ while Roger Frey introduced a key Gaullist theme of the Fifth Republic in calling for France to withdraw from the Atlantic Pact if American support for a negotiated settlement continued.⁷⁸ Algeria determined the Gaullists' approach to every other international question. European or Atlantic integration was to be rejected if it prevented the independent development of the French nuclear energy programme – in civilian as well as military terms – as this would prevent the realisation of the potential of Algeria and the Sahara.⁷⁹ Likewise, arms reduction treaties, proposed in the name of cold war détente, posed a threat to French North Africa by limiting France's freedom of action in military affairs and subjugating French defence policy to the needs of the Western Alliance as a whole.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 369 (21.2.1957). Soustelle was a member of the French delegations to the UN in 1955 and 1957.

⁷⁶ Michelet, *Contre la guerre civile*, pp. 66-71

⁷⁷ Soustelle, 'France Looks at her Alliances', pp. 126-7

⁷⁸ *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 26 (Nov. 1957)

⁷⁹ Debré, *CR*, 26.7.1956, *JORF*

⁸⁰ Debré, *CR*, 12.12.1957, *JORF*

Rather than contributing to détente, the Gaullists were increasingly convinced that France was in fact fighting the cold war alone. Debré argued that a thaw in relations between East and West actually depended upon French success in Algeria, as this would remove the real threat: Islamic nationalism.⁸¹ Most Gaullists, however, continued to insist that international communism was the real enemy, particularly when their opinions were likely to be heard by the United States. Thus Soustelle focused on the 'encirclement' theory of Soviet aid to North African nationalism in his article in *Foreign Affairs*, claiming that 'France has been the vanguard of the Western world since 1945', and threatening a communist take-over in France in the event of defeat in Algeria: 'If the tricolor is lowered in Algeria the red flag will soon fly in Paris'.⁸² Soustelle clearly played on American fears of communism in an attempt to win support for the war in Algeria, yet his words correspond to what other Gaullists had been saying in parliament and in the Gaullist press and party conferences for some time. Even though some, like Debré, seemed to be moving towards considering Islam and not communism as the real threat, the anticommunism that had always been present in Gaullism rose to the surface easily in response to the internationalisation of the Algerian conflict.

Internationalisation of the conflict, as has been seen, was considered the chief danger in 1956. Yet Gaullists offered no suggestions as to how it could be prevented, other than by refusing to acknowledge the UN's competence, which had failed by 1957. Therefore, this seemingly intractable problem became a means of criticising the government, with frequent speeches in parliament insisting that the government stand up to the United States, particularly concerning its aid to Morocco and Tunisia. By 1958, the offer of American 'good offices' after the Sakiet bombing, which was only accepted reluctantly by the Gaillard government,⁸³ heightened Gaullist fears of

⁸¹ Debré, *CR*, 26.5.1956, *JORF*

⁸² Soustelle, 'France Looks at her Alliances', pp. 116-27

⁸³ The government accepted the 'good offices' on condition that the mediation was to concern only the Franco-Tunisian dispute and not extend to Algeria. However, the American choice of representative,

American designs on North Africa, particularly the Sahara, where they feared American involvement in the ongoing border disputes to the advantage of Morocco and Tunisia.⁸⁴ Debré, typically, objected to the 'good offices' on more legalistic grounds, claiming another infringement of sovereignty following an earlier proposal, in January 1958, to invite international observers to supervise elections in Algeria.⁸⁵ Thus, not only was the United States guilty of seeking to impinge on French sovereignty, but the French government itself was ceding some of its sovereignty, further undermining its credibility in Gaullist eyes. The good offices were opposed on grounds of precedent too, with the Dutch experience of American mediation in Indonesia cited as proof that no good could come of the American mission to North Africa.⁸⁶

Fiercely opposed to internationalisation of the Algerian conflict, the Gaullists sought to undermine those considered responsible: the Arab League. Campaigns against Egypt's influence and ambitions began some time before the Suez crisis, Soustelle warning of a choice to be made between French presence in North Africa and an 'empire arabe'.⁸⁷ Debré argued that the mass exodus of Algerian Jews to Israel demonstrated that the emerging Arab states were a danger to the principles of liberal, tolerant society, not to mention his use of the Second World War analogy that recalled previous Gaullist descriptions of Bourguiba and Nasser as the new Hitler.⁸⁸ The Suez crisis of October 1956, therefore, was seen by Gaullists chiefly as a means to prevent the further expansion of pan-Arabism and to stop Nasser's arms deliveries to the ALN. In this respect, the Gaullists found themselves in closer agreement with the government than at any time since the RS ministers' resignation over Morocco in October 1955. Foccart praised the government for finally acting in the national

Murphy, dispelled any goodwill that this concession might have elicited from Gaullists; Murphy had been sympathetic to Vichy during his mission to North Africa during the Second World War.

⁸⁴ Dronne, *AN*, 27.3.1958, *JORF*

⁸⁵ Debré, *CR*, 17.1.1958, *JORF*

⁸⁶ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 416 (20.2.1958)

⁸⁷ Soustelle, 'La vérité sur l'Algérie', speech, 2.3.1956

⁸⁸ Debré, *CR*, 17.4.1956, *JORF*

interest, though, in the spirit of Gaullist opposition, he also regretted that it had taken an Israeli pretext and British support for the government to commit to an action that should have been undertaken independently. The immediate Gaullist judgement on the Suez action displayed a degree of optimism not seen since Mendès-France's reforms of 1954:

Comme il ne faut se faire aucune illusion sur les dispositions présentes de l'Islam à notre égard, le maintien et le renforcement d'Israël au coeur du monde arabe est, dans notre jeu, un atout maître... Assisterions-nous à une renaissance de l'indépendance française?⁸⁹

After such optimism, the Franco-British withdrawal in the face of American and Soviet intervention confirmed many of the Gaullists' convictions about American hostility to French interests. While the government immediately devoted its energy to European integration after the humiliation of Suez, the Gaullists instead found proof that the government's existing foreign policy, based on alliances, was failing France. Soustelle, beginning his long identification of Israel and *Algérie française*, now claimed that Algeria and Israel were victims of the same dangers: pan-Arabism, Soviet ambitions and American indifference, calling for a formal Franco-Israeli alliance.⁹⁰ By 1957, the relationship between pan-Arabism and communism was clear to leading Gaullists: faced with these two threats, Algeria and Israel had become pillars of the West, and the United States and United Nations could therefore no longer be relied upon to defend the Mediterranean and, by extension, to defend French interests.⁹¹

⁸⁹ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 353 (31.10.1956)

⁹⁰ Soustelle, 'L'Orient, foyer de guerre', speech, 23.11.1956. In preparatory notes for this speech, Soustelle suggested that the 'Arab lobby' in the United States was responsible for its attitude towards Israel and France. RPF archives, *Dossier Soustelle*, Nov, 1956. Support for Israel became a key feature of the defence of *Algérie française*. Soustelle took up the Israeli cause strongly in the 1960s, becoming active in organisations supporting Israel and publishing *La longue marche d'Israël* (Paris: Fayard, 1968), while the putsch attempt of April 1961 claimed to have received promises of Israeli support.

⁹¹ Debré, CR, 4.12.1956, *JORF*; Soustelle, AN, 21.3.1957, *JORF*; Debré, CR, 14.1.1958, *JORF*

Just as Suez proved the inadequacy of alliance with the United States, so the government's response – renewed focus on Europe – was, for Gaullists, evidence of its limited vision and failure to represent French interests. Many of the themes seen in the anti-EDC campaign thus resurfaced after Suez. The European idea had already suffered attacks from Gaullists earlier in 1956, over the threat that the EURATOM project seemed to pose to France's nuclear force and all that that represented.⁹² The British failure at Suez, along with only lukewarm support from Britain, Germany and Italy over Algeria, persuaded Debré that France could not expect help from the European nations the proposed EEC would bring it into partnership with. Europe, he argued, was becoming incompatible with vital French economic and strategic interests, which were situated in the Mediterranean and Africa:

Dans quelle mesure le fait pour la France de disparaître au sein d'une petite Europe pourra-t-il aider à la défense des intérêts français en Méditerranée, au Proche-Orient et en Afrique?... L'intégration de la France dans la petite Europe telle qu'elle est prévue aura pour nos intérêts et, par conséquent, pour nos concitoyens dans l'ensemble du monde africain des conséquences si graves ...⁹³

Any European Assembly and community that were created must, Gaullists argued, include Algeria and the *Union française*.⁹⁴ The idea of Eurafrica, somewhat sidelined by the North African crises since the EDC debate, reappeared early in 1958 as the logical outcome of the creation of an EEC including members' overseas territories: 'Sur le plan international l'année 1957 peut être le point de départ d'une Eurafrique qui, entre les deux blocs, américain et soviétique, constituerait un élément de stabilité dans le monde'.⁹⁵ Indeed, evoking the spirit of the Second World War again as the Fourth Republic appeared to be entering into terminal decline, Debré's *Salut Public*

⁹² The threat that European integration posed to the French independent nuclear programme was described by Debré, in March 1958, as the reason why the nuclear programme should be started as a matter of urgency before international treaties prevented it. It might be argued that this was therefore a contributing factor in the Gaullists' conviction that the Fourth Republic could not be allowed to survive beyond 1958. Debré, CR, 18.3.1958, *JORF*

⁹³ Debré, CR, 19.3.1957, *JORF*

⁹⁴ Debré, CR, 19.11.1957, *JORF*; *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 410 (10.1.1958)

⁹⁵ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 410 (10.1.1958.)

stressed that the idea of Franco-African community as opposed to focus entirely on European unity was the heritage of Free France; to abandon this heritage by embracing the 'small Europe' would therefore amount to a betrayal of the wartime founding principles of Gaullism.⁹⁶

By 1958, therefore, inspired by long-standing Gaullist views on international affairs and the catalysts of Suez and Sakiet, the Gaullists had not necessarily reached any new conclusions about the international context of the Algerian crisis, but they had certainly been strengthened in their convictions about the inadequacy of the Allied – particularly American – protection, the twin communist and pan-Arab threat in North Africa, the uselessness of the United Nations, the dangers of European integration for France's African role, and the government and regime's weakness faced with international pressure.

The Gaullist Assault on the Republic

The origins of the Gaullists' determination to bring down the Fourth Republic in May 1958 can be found in the areas discussed earlier in this chapter: frustration that military success in Algeria did not lead to a successful resolution of the conflict, concern at the pace and direction of reform plans that seemed to weaken the link between France and Algeria, and increasing annoyance at governments' inability to resist international pressure. Yet, as was the case with Gaullist frustration at the way in which Indochina, Morocco and Tunisia had been 'lost', the crisis of authority in the colonies was not seen as solely to blame for France's problems: the system of government that had already been attacked for ten years before 1956 continued to prove its incompetence to Gaullists. By 1956, the *malaise* of Algeria appeared to have spread to metropolitan France in general and not only to its politicians. In addition to devoting considerable energy to discrediting the system and planning its

⁹⁶ *Salut Public*, 19 (February 1958)

downfall, the Gaullists also attacked defeatism, Algerian nationalism in France, communism and a general sense of division and apathy about the Algerian crisis.⁹⁷

Much defeatism, the Gaullists claimed, was generated purely by the press both in Algeria and France. Any exceptions were praised, particularly the *Echo d'Alger*, which was the principal newspaper in Algiers and edited by the Pétainist Alain de Sérigny.⁹⁸ In May 1958, de Sérigny's late conversion to support for de Gaulle was hugely influential in the Gaullists' being able to take control of the *pied-noir* protests; the Gaullists were clearly moving towards rapprochement with the *pied-noir* community from 1956.⁹⁹ Of more serious concern was the increase in Algerian nationalist activity in Paris, a subject that had exercised Gaullists intermittently since the early 1950s. By 1956, however, their earlier suggestions that this might be prevented by improvements in the living conditions and prospects of immigrants (see pp. 76-7) had given way to calls for strict action. The senator Tharradin called on the government to put a stop to all 'anti-French' meetings taking place in France and to put pressure on foreign governments to stop Arab League activity in Paris.¹⁰⁰ Jean Legendre contrasted the seemingly successful measures to deal with nationalists in Algeria – at the height of the battle of Algiers – with the freedom of movement and expression allowed to nationalists in Paris, while Soustelle issued a darker warning that the war might spread to Paris in the face of apparent indifference to violence and terrorism among the Muslim community.¹⁰¹ For Foccart, however, the real problem was not the Algerians in Paris but rather the record numbers of immigrants returning to Algeria – seen as proof that the immigrant community was in the grip of ALN

⁹⁷ Studies of public opinion throughout 1956 reveal a higher percentage of the population willing to accept negotiations, leading possibly to independence, than those in favour of pursuing complete military victory, while the numbers in favour of *Algérie française* and believing that Algeria would remain French declined from mid-1956. C.R. Ageron, 'L'opinion française à travers les sondages', in *La Guerre d'Algérie et les Français*, ed. by J.P. Rioux (Paris: Fayard, 1990), pp. 25-44

⁹⁸ The Gaullist deputy Edmond Barrachin singled out the *Echo d'Alger* for praise in parliament while attacking the press in general for being too defeatist. Barrachin, *AN*, 1.6.1956, *JORF*

⁹⁹ For the Gaullists' role in 'converting' de Sérigny, see p. 255 below

¹⁰⁰ Tharradin, *CR*, 15.5.1956, *JORF*

¹⁰¹ Legendre, *AN*, 20.3.1957, *JORF*; Soustelle, *AN*, 17.7.1957, *JORF*

recruiters and taken as further evidence of the need for greater commitment and sense of purpose.¹⁰²

Lack of commitment on the part of the nation as a whole might be said to be the Gaullists' main concern in the domestic situation. As early as March 1956, Dronne saw this lack of government commitment manifested in the recall of Soustelle from Algeria, though it was rare for a Governor-General to serve for more than two years.¹⁰³ For Debré, what was needed were symbols of national effort, unity and purpose in the fight to keep Algeria French; he called for twinning of French and Algerian towns, public works projects to employ young people, and shorter holidays.¹⁰⁴ This somewhat interventionist or authoritarian approach was clearly popular with other Gaullists. René Dubois first called for a government of public safety – an emotive term with allusions to 1789, and one that would become common currency in 1958 – in December 1956.¹⁰⁵ Raymond Triboulet later set the tone for the Gaullists' final assault on the 'system' by attacking the Church (for its conciliatory stance on Algeria), the schools (for neglecting their duty to create citizens and promote loyalty to the nation), the unions (for having too limited aims), the intellectuals (for failing to propose any solutions), and the familiar targets of politicians, parties, the press and governments.¹⁰⁶ Around the same time, Debré, as will be seen in a later section, began his fierce assault on the regime, even questioning the relevance of notions of democracy when faced with a crisis of legitimacy. This was reflected in Gaullist calls for the Communist Party to be banned: Dubois felt that to allow the communists to speak in parliament undermined the effort in Algeria, while Debré saw the PCF as another threat to national independence, being essentially the agents of a foreign country.¹⁰⁷ The Gaullists'

¹⁰² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 325 (15.3.1956)

¹⁰³ Dronne, *AN*, 8.3.1956, *JORF*

¹⁰⁴ Debré, *CR*, 29.5.1956, *JORF*

¹⁰⁵ Dubois, *CR*, 4.12.1956, *JORF*

¹⁰⁶ R. Triboulet, *Des vessies pour des lanternes* (Vire: Lecuire, 1958)

¹⁰⁷ Dubois, *CR*, 4.12.1956, *JORF*; Debré, Soustelle & Arrighi, 'Débat: pourquoi il faut interdire le Parti Communiste', *Voici Pourquoi*, 4 (30.1.1958)

attacks on their regular enemies began, between 1956 and 1958, to take on an air of purpose and stridency that had previously been less evident. Events like Sakiet, in this climate, served to confirm their impression of government division and incompetence, and the ensuing parliamentary debates gave them a means of developing their attacks on the regime to an increasingly receptive audience.

The assault on the regime, at the same time as castigating those responsible for France's predicament, was careful to identify those worthy of praise. These were principally the army and the police, charged with defending France in Algeria and maintaining order in the absence of an effective state. The Gaullists called upon the government to defend the army against press attacks, though these attacks tended to focus on the delicate question of torture during the Battle of Algiers. For the Gaullists, however, the government was neglecting its duty to defend the nation if it did not take action to stop criticism of the army's activities; Dubois attempted, unsuccessfully, to introduce a law making it an offence to criticise the police or army or treat 'terrorists' as legitimate combatants.¹⁰⁸ It is likely that in proposing such measures, the Gaullists were well aware that their chances of success were slim; the importance of such tactics was to demonstrate support for the military effort and, perhaps more importantly, to appeal to the as yet untapped body of support for a more vigorous approach to the Algerian problem and the state of the nation that they assumed to exist, in accordance with the view that every Frenchman was a potential Gaullist. The value of appearing as the defenders of the police and army against the unpopular government was not underestimated either, as the Gaullists had been aware since the abortive plot to seize power in 1954 (see pp. 118-22) of the potential that existed for similar action to overthrow the Republic. The resurgence of activism in the army in Algeria, including the bazooka affair of 1956 in which Debré was implicated,¹⁰⁹ meant the possibility of capitalising on military activism was returning

¹⁰⁸ Dubois, *CR*, 14.11.1957, *JORF*

¹⁰⁹ The so-called bazooka affair was a plot by *pied-noir* extremists to assassinate General Salan, who was thought to be 'soft' on colonial affairs. He was to be replaced by General Cogy, who had links to

to Gaullist minds towards 1958. Early in 1958, the Gaullists sought to associate themselves with protests on the part of the police, whose morale was low as a result of Algerian terrorist attacks and a perceived lack of government commitment.¹¹⁰ By early 1958, therefore, the Gaullists' mission to discredit the regime was well advanced; there remained the task of persuading the nation of the legitimacy of revolt and overcoming the divisions and differences of opinion that had arisen since the 1956 elections.

The Gaullists' arguments for the urgent need to replace the regime developed familiar themes: Algeria would be lost, and this would lead to communist dictatorship in France:

L'opinion française n'acceptera pas la perte de l'Afrique du Nord et le régime ne survivra pas à la perte de l'Afrique du Nord. Il sera emporté par la colère populaire. Ce serait la grande aventure avec au bout probablement la dictature de ceux-ci [the extreme left].¹¹¹

The Gaullists' task from 1956 onwards, therefore, would be to channel the anticipated wave of popular protest – already evoked by de Gaulle following the defeat in Indochina – in a Gaullist rather than a communist direction. Their

Gaullists including Debré. Debré was named, at the trial of those involved, as one of the plot's directors in Paris, an accusation he has always denied. There is, however, considerable evidence of Debré's knowledge of other attempts to impose a military regime in Algiers. On the bazooka affair and alleged Gaullist-military conspiracies before 1958, see C. Nick, *Résurrection. Naissance de la Vème République: un coup d'Etat démocratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), pp. 237-67; J. Ferniot, *De Gaulle et le 13 mai* (Paris: Plon, 1965), pp. 97-110; R. Salan, *Mémoires: fin d'un empire*, vol. 3: *Algérie française* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1972), pp. 91-144. Gaullist memoirs are understandably silent on the subject; P. Samuel, *Michel Debré: l'architecte du Général* (Paris: Arnaud Franel, 1999), pp. 127-41 rejects the theory of Debré's involvement in any plots. In the absence of any sources other than accounts of the trial and some memoirs, these early plots, like the events of 1958, must remain within the realm of speculation. It might be said, however, that the fact that Debré was so readily associated with clandestine military and *pied-noir* activities reveals much about the Gaullists' success in presenting themselves as a legitimate and credible alternative to the Fourth Republic and as capable of preserving French Algeria.

¹¹⁰ A demonstration by the Paris police in March 1958, supported by Gaullists and attended by many who were to be involved in the events of May, was seen as an indication of the potential that clearly existed for a mass movement involving Gaullists and army or police against the Fourth Republic. On the succession of demonstrations and the heated climate of early 1958, see D. Tartakowsky, *Les manifestations de rue en France 1918-1968* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997), pp. 649-50.

¹¹¹ Dronne, AN, 8.3.1956, JORF

arguments to this end focused on their vision of a France with no future to look forward to after the loss of Algeria, condemned, like in 1939, to decadence and decline. In this respect, they turned their attention away from questions of Algeria's future and concentrated instead on France, distinguishing themselves from the most fervent *Algérie française* campaigners, who never addressed the question of the future of the nation as a whole.¹¹² Soustelle adopted the familiar *Algérie française* refrain that no issue affecting France was unrelated to the Algerian situation, though he focused on the consequences of withdrawal for France rather than Algeria. Algerian independence, he argued, would lead first to the 'loss' of the rest of Africa, then to economic weakness, a symbol of decline. Raising the spectre of decadence through comparisons with 1939, Soustelle argued that Algeria held the key to the regeneration of France, not only in economic or political terms, but also in the more mystical concept of greatness associated with 'pure' Gaullism:

Tout le monde comprend bien ... qu'en réalité le drame n'est même pas celui de l'Algérie, c'est celui de la décadence. C'est la question ... qui nous est posée, à tous et à chacun: 'Acceptez-vous la décadence de la France?' ... *Oui*, c'est s'incliner ... en invoquant les mythes obscurs et commodes de l'esprit du temps et de la fatalité historique. *Non*, c'est résister. C'est croire que la volonté et le sacrifice des humains pèsent dans la balance. C'est se dire que si la France a abandonné Pondichéry, le Portugal est demeuré à Goa. C'est se rappeler que l'*Afrika Korps* fonçait sur l'Égypte mais qu'il y eut El-Alamein, que la *Wehrmacht* a foulé les rives de la Volga mais qu'il y a eu Stalingrad. C'est savoir que toute vague historique connaît son flux et son reflux, que le temps arrive toujours où la cavalerie d'invasion tourne bride, qu'on a vu cent fois des assiégés obstinés briser l'élan des conquérants qui battaient les murailles, et qu'enfin on a toujours une chance de gagner une bataille, à condition de la livrer.¹¹³

¹¹² Soustelle, after 1959, became increasingly identified with this tendency, though he continued to advance arguments based on Algeria's geopolitical significance. The *Algérie française* campaign's close focus on Algeria above all else is generally recognised as the factor that set it apart from Gaullism after 1958.

¹¹³ Soustelle, *Le drame algérien et la décadence française*, pp. 66-7. Soustelle's argument might be seen as a return to many of the concepts of 'pure' Gaullism: refuting historical inevitability with examples from the Second World War, and believing in the human capacity to make the effort required to triumph over adversity. Soustelle's reference to Portugal's defence of its Indian colonial outpost after French and British withdrawal also reveals something of the direction of Soustelle's thought: as his path diverged from that of de Gaulle from 1959, Soustelle and other *Algérie française* militants frequently expressed admiration for Salazar's Portugal, as much for its internal politics as its

Historical comparisons with previous regimes' decline were a favoured tactic of the Gaullists' attempts to generate a sense of impending crisis, particularly in the work of Michel Debré, as will be seen in the next section. Roger Frey demonstrated that such comparison was not the exclusive domain of the intellectual leaders of Gaullism, comparing France to ancient Rome, where, in moments of greatest danger, power was conferred upon the figure most capable of saving the Republic.¹¹⁴

That the nation's decline would lead to eventual public awakening and calls for de Gaulle was the Gaullists' plan. However, any revolt in Algeria was likely to come from the political sections of the army or from the *pieds-noirs*, neither of which was a pro-Gaullist section of the population. In France, meanwhile, any revolt against the government would surely benefit either the communists or the re-emerging extreme right. Thus, the Gaullists sought to strengthen contacts with potential allies in revolt in Algeria, while discrediting their rivals on the right and their enemies on the left in France. The link between Gaullism and the *Algérie française* campaigners in both Algeria and France was provided by the USRAF; departmental RS federations helped in the creation of local USRAF committees, one such example being in the Nord where Léon Delbecq, Chaban-Delmas' envoy to Algiers and the most important figure in turning the May 13 1958 demonstration to the Gaullists' advantage, was head of the RS federation that encouraged the USRAF's local branch.¹¹⁵ The national *Comité Directeur* of the USRAF included the Gaullists Debré and de Monsabert alongside Soustelle and former Algerian governors Violette, Naegelen and Léonard. *Anciens Combattants* also figured prominently in the developing Gaullist-USRAF networks, an important means of achieving support in Algeria where the role of veterans in politics was considerable. Among the veterans'

determination to hold onto its colonies. Indeed, Portuguese support for the 1961 putsch was widely claimed at the time and many OAS members sought refuge in Portugal after condemnation in France.

¹¹⁴ *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 31 (25.2.1958)

¹¹⁵ M.F. Chevrillon, 'Les Républicains Sociaux ou la Traversée du désert', (unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1965), p. 364

groups associated with the USRAF were several *pied-noir* and Indochina veterans movements, but also the *Association des Français Libres* and the *Confédération Nationale des Combattants Volontaires de la Résistance*, both of which might be assumed to be pro-Gaullist, rather than Pétainist like the Algerian veterans' associations.¹¹⁶ It must be noted that high-level Gaullist involvement in the USRAF declined somewhat in early 1958, with Debré concentrating instead on his *Courrier de la Colère* and on developing contacts in metropolitan France; Soustelle, however, remained very much at the head of the movement alongside *pieds-noirs* and less senior Gaullists such as Delbecque and Pierre Picard. His description of the USRAF as neither a *groupement* – de Gaulle's dismissive term for political parties – nor a party seems to identify the USRAF closely with the kind of national, cross-party movement that the Gaullists were calling for in 1958.¹¹⁷

Gaullist links with the higher reaches of *pied-noir* society, as opposed to the *petits blancs* who made up the bulk of the activist organisations at the centre of the various plots and on the fringes of the USRAF, were less strong. The so-called *grands-colons* had, after all, been condemned by Soustelle for obstructing integration and for maintaining an outdated colonial attitude. Yet there is evidence that, by April 1958, landowners in Algeria had joined the urban political classes in supporting Gaullism in the form of Soustelle; fundraising campaigns took place among the landowners and farmers of the Oran region to finance Soustelle's activities.¹¹⁸ In Morocco and Tunisia, meanwhile, the Gaullists were instrumental in aiding the landowners forced to leave their land after independence. Foccart organised the relocation to New Caledonia of a number of farmers, in the name of developing agriculture and

¹¹⁶ *La vérité sur l'Algérie*, 3 (25.10.1956) & 14 (7.7.1957). In June 1957, an entire issue of this USRAF newspaper was devoted to extensive coverage of an *anciens combattants*' gathering in Algiers, showing that the supposed antigaullism of many of the participating groups did not prevent Soustelle's publication from highlighting their importance and taking up their cause.

¹¹⁷ Soustelle, Discours de clôture, USRAF Assemblée Générale, 2.2.1958, in *La Vérité sur l'Algérie*, 17 (February 1958)

¹¹⁸ Dubois, *AN*, 15.4.1958, *JORF*

exploiting the islands' potential – a kind of *mise en valeur* – and of increasing the French settlement of the territory.¹¹⁹

With contacts established in the military, veteran and settler communities by 1958, the Gaullists also focused on metropolitan France. In addition to developing contacts with *Algérie française* supporters, they attempted to discredit the left. They focused on the socialists' and communists' claims to be acting in the spirit of the wartime resistance and against right-wing extremism in supporting a negotiated settlement in Algeria, thus avoiding further conflict and denying success to the *pieds-noirs*, seen by the left as colonialist exploiters and unreformed Pétainists. The Gaullists did not limit their criticism to the left-wing political parties: intellectuals were also frequently attacked. Soustelle, for example, published *Le Drame algérien et la décadence française* in response to Raymond Aron's call for withdrawal from Algeria.¹²⁰ *L'Express*, the journal that had strongly supported Mendès-France in 1954-55, was fiercely criticised for publishing allegations of torture in Algeria, while the undercurrent of anti-intellectual feeling always present in Gaullism lent itself to denunciations of individuals like Jean-Paul Sartre who sided with the PCF against the war effort.

The left's comparison between opposition to the war in Algeria and Resistance to Nazism in the Second World War effort enraged Gaullists. Soustelle argued that the left had confused the two sides in Algeria:

Dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, le fascisme c'est Nasser, le totalitarisme c'est le fanatisme pan-arabe qui a plongé l'Algérie dans un bain de sang. Les prétendus 'antifascistes' qui font aujourd'hui le jeu de l'entreprise pan-arabe remplissent objectivement, même s'ils ne se rendent pas compte, le rôle qui fut celui des Doriot, des Déat.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ RPF archives, *Maroc*, 51/6.3, Foccart correspondence, October 1956

¹²⁰ R. Aron, *La Tragédie algérienne* (Paris: Plon, 1957)

¹²¹ RPF archives, *Dossier Soustelle*, 'Réponse à la note du Comité de Vigilance Antifasciste des Intellectuels', 4.6.1956

Given Soustelle's leading role in the *Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes* in the 1930s, his attack on those attempting to develop a similar initiative twenty years later reveals the extent to which the Algerian experience had altered the views of the former socialist and antifascist activist. Edmond Michelet joined the Gaullist attacks on the left's tactics. Drawing upon his wartime experience of deportation and imprisonment, he accused the FLN and their supporters of 'sacrilege' in claiming to be inspired by the Resistance, especially when Algerians loyal to France were denounced as collaborators. The Resistance analogy, Michelet argued, could only be applied to resistance to tyranny, as in Hungary in 1956, or to opposition to defeatism and belief in national independence, thus reclaiming the resistance legacy for Gaullism.¹²² The analogy established, Michelet and other Gaullists began, from 1957, frequently to evoke the 'spirit of June 18, 1940'. Soustelle's attack on the left intensified in 1958, when he accused the communist party of betraying the working class of North Africa, supporting the successors to the dictators of the 1930s, and replacing its anticlericalism with support for religious fanatics.¹²³

The Algerian situation had, in Gaullists' opinion, caused the left to become the champion of the practices and values of the far-right. The extreme-right itself had to be discredited in turn, to allow the Gaullists to take advantage of the antiparlamentarianism and anticommunism it represented without appearing antirepublican or extremist. Since the 1956 elections, as has been seen, the immediate priority in this respect was to regain Gaullist supporters who had become Poujadists. The Gaullist deputy Pesquet was expelled from the RS in October 1956 after forming a sub-group in parliament with some Poujadists who wished to support government policy on Suez.¹²⁴ The Gaullist attack on the 'nouvelle droite' continued,

¹²² Michelet, *Contre la guerre civile*, pp. 186-93 & 'Esprit de la Résistance', *Le Monde*, 19.6.1957

¹²³ Soustelle, 'Lettre à un ami de gauche', *Voici Pourquoi*, 10 (24.4.1958)

¹²⁴ *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 354 (8.11.1956)

with Michelet condemning the Right for abandoning French responsibilities in Africa in favour of a retreat into Europe because of the economic burden that the colonies represented.¹²⁵ As for the nationalist far-right, which had been gathering strength since 1954, Gaullists condemned its readiness to accept American protection against communism at the expense of control of North Africa. The Gaullists' fervent anticommunism would not extend to devoting all their energies to fighting the Cold War in Europe.¹²⁶ The Gaullists' quest for republican respectability after years of attacking the 'system' led them to vigorously deny allegations of involvement in right-wing plots against the government in both Algiers and Paris, claiming that these were being invented by the authorities to discredit the likes of Debré and Soustelle.¹²⁷

The Gaullists appeared united in attacking their enemies in domestic politics. Their opinions on how to hasten the Republic's downfall, however, demonstrated that the divisions of 1955 had not disappeared in the growing sense of anticipation and urgency. The question of participation in and co-operation with government still divided Gaullists. Support for government was generally considered acceptable in certain circumstances where Algerian interests were at stake, such as in demonstrating foreign interference in the conflict to the United Nations, or limited support for the Mollet government to move it away from the left and avoid its early defeat, which would surely have led to a general call for negotiations and withdrawal from Algeria.¹²⁸ The RS vote on the fall of the Mollet government in May 1957 was divided, only Dronne and Brusset actually voting against the government while four others abstained and twelve RS deputies supported Mollet.¹²⁹ The Bourgès-Manoury government, too, was not condemned completely by the Gaullists, though they did, after some debate, decide not to participate in it because they considered it too pro-

¹²⁵ Michelet, *Contre la guerre civile*, pp. 23-6

¹²⁶ Soustelle, 'Lettre à un homme de droite', *Voici Pourquoi*, 9 (10.4.1958)

¹²⁷ Soustelle, 'Les provocateurs à l'œuvre', *La vérité sur l'Algérie*, 11 (1.3.1957)

¹²⁸ Chevrillon, pp. 337-8

¹²⁹ *Le Monde*, 23.5.1957

European.¹³⁰ Soustelle's fierce assault on it over the *loi-cadre* in November 1957 is generally credited with bringing about its downfall, though even on this issue Soustelle protested that his intention was limited to securing an acceptable project for Algeria and his primary intention had not necessarily been to create further instability.¹³¹

In general, however, the Gaullists were sceptical of the benefits of continued association with the regime. At the 1957 RS congress, disagreement arose between the majority of party activists and some leaders, such as Roger Frey, who insisted that Gaullists like Chaban-Delmas had a role to play in government as long as the Algerian situation remained precarious. For Frey, the Gaullists were too weak a political force to sustain opposition without using the methods of the 'system':

Il nous faut bien vivre dans le siècle, il nous faut bien vivre dans le régime ... Tout ce que nous pouvons faire, c'est essayer de limiter les désastres que le régime porte en lui comme la nuée porte l'orage, c'est empêcher les périls de monter autour de nous, c'est essayer d'éviter que le recours au général de Gaulle n'intervienne au lendemain de la catastrophe et sur la terre brûlée ... Il nous faut employer les moyens même du système, nous y inclure, y travailler ... Etant admis que nous préférions que le relèvement national fût rapide, spectaculaire, glorieux, mais qu'il ne dépend pas de nous qu'il soit tel, nous devons, beaucoup plus modestement, travailler à le rendre possible.¹³²

Even in 1958, Chaban-Delmas' position as Defence Minister in the Gaillard government enjoyed more support from Gaullists than might be expected. The fact that he occupied a post central to the military effort in Algeria and the nuclear

¹³⁰ H.J. Tümmers, 'Das "Centre National des Républicains Sociaux": Eine Gaullistische Partei unter der IV. Republik', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universität Augsburg, 1980), p. 225

¹³¹ Responding to Prime Minister Gaillard's accusation, in April 1958, that his role in bringing down Bourges-Manoury over the *loi-cadre* had been entirely destructive, Soustelle insisted that his reputation as the wrecker of that administration was the fault of the Fourth Republic system: in opposing one piece of legislation he had ultimately brought about the fall of the government because of the regime's inherent weakness. The link between acceptance of or opposition to any government's reform proposals for Algeria and the downfall of the regime was clearly very obvious to Gaullists by 1958. Soustelle, *AN*, 15.4.1958, *JORF*

¹³² Debré archives (Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques), 1DE24, 4.1, R. Frey, 'Rapport de politique générale', *RS Congrès National*, Bordeaux, February 1957

programme surely explains this indulgence, in addition to the fact that the ‘Antenne’ of the ministry he established in Algiers was designed to ensure that any revolt there would be turned to the Gaullists’ advantage. Chaban-Delmas’ position, however, became increasingly unpopular with the ordinary party militants: the Meurthe-et-Moselle RS federation, for example, condemned his behaviour as ‘incompatible avec la doctrine du parti’.¹³³ Chaban-Delmas was replaced by Michelet as RS President, to avoid further discord of this type, and militant Gaullists like Dronne and Debré became distanced from and frustrated with their colleague.

Debré, in contrast, claimed to see no benefit at all in Gaullist involvement in government. He argued that the RS participation in government had not led to the adoption of policies acceptable to the Gaullists, other than preventing further concessions over Algeria, which was clearly not seen as an unqualified success given the Gaullists’ constant attacks on the government’s Algerian policy:

Que le bénéfice de la participation ait été réel en ce qui concerne la politique algérienne, je le conçois, je le reconnais, mais regardons aussi le côté négatif ... qu’avons-nous pu faire en ce qui concerne le Maroc, la Tunisie? Qu’avons-nous pu faire pour la rédaction de ces traités soi-disant européens qui risquent d’être signés dans quelques jours? Rien! ... Enfin, il y a une constatation déterminante: la participation hâte-t-elle la réforme ou la survie du régime?¹³⁴

That influence on Algerian affairs was not deemed sufficient to justify participation in government demonstrates that Debré was already beginning to see the Algerian crisis in terms of its importance for the State and the Nation as a whole, as will be seen in more detail in the following section. By March 1958’s *Conseil national*, calls for Chaban to resign from government were widespread and Triboulet now found no support for an attempted defence of participation.¹³⁵ The Hautes-Pyrénées federation

¹³³ Tümmers, p. 232

¹³⁴ Debré archives, IDE22, 4.1, speech, RS Congrès National, Bordeaux, February 1957

¹³⁵ Tümmers, p. 241

called for Chaban-Delmas to leave either the government or the Gaullist movement, and the RS *Commission politique permanente* decided, in April 1958, that Chaban's presence could no longer prevent them from condemning the government outright.¹³⁶ The Gaullists' association with the 'system' was deemed to have failed, with a concerted effort to bring down the Republic now apparently their only preoccupation.

The crisis following the fall of the Mollet government in May 1957 had given rise to hopes that Soustelle would be called to form a coalition government that Gaullists saw as the first step to the desired government of public safety.¹³⁷ However, the choice of Bourgès-Manoury as Prime Minister instead of Soustelle, and the five week period without a government that followed his resignation in October 1957, caused some disillusion in Gaullist circles. It was against this background of frustration that the attacks on participation discussed above began to intensify. At this time, several activists including Léon Delbecque began to demand that RS members be authorised to adopt alternative tactics to the official policy of waiting for an opportunity to arise to either enter government or bring down the regime in parliament.¹³⁸ The final phase of Gaullist opposition to the Fourth Republic might therefore be dated from around November 1957, which also saw the appearance of Debré's *Courrier de la Colère*. The Gaullists shifted the focus of their campaigning away from solely attacking the government's record on Algeria, developing the idea of de Gaulle as saviour, and the typically Gaullist concept of legitimate revolt. By April 1958, *Salut Public* described revolt as a right and a duty, to be exercised in the present situation.¹³⁹ The fall of the Gaillard government in the same month convinced Gaullists that the opportunity to come to power had arisen, and the

¹³⁶ Tümmers, pp. 243-4

¹³⁷ Chevrillon, p. 349

¹³⁸ Chevrillon, pp. 357-8

¹³⁹ A. Roulland (member of RS *comité directeur*), 'Le droit à l'insurrection', *Salut Public*, 20 (April 1958)

situation facing the nation was routinely presented as a choice between de Gaulle and the Communists.

Michel Debré 1957-58: *Algérie française* and the Nation's Last Chance

The pace of developments within Gaullism from November 1957's somewhat disorganised state to May 1958's return to power owed much to the concerted campaign that took place during those six months. While the Algerian affair was never neglected during this period, the Gaullists did not greatly contribute to the debate about reform or Algeria's future, concentrating instead on how to interpret the crisis and convince the nation of its seriousness. Michel Debré was instrumental in this final stage in the evolution of Fourth Republic Gaullism from a movement of opposition to one of revolt, and his contribution to both Gaullist thinking and tactics is crucial to an understanding of the intellectual and political context in which the Gaullists' return to power in May 1958 took place. This section will therefore focus on the arguments used by Debré against the regime, after a brief summary of his views on the Algerian situation.

Debré's views on the Algerian problem and what it meant for France did not differ greatly from those of other leading Gaullists. He did, however, see the rebellion as a question of sovereignty, legitimacy and the role of the State first and foremost, and this informed his response to any proposed reforms. Thus, the *loi-cadre* was judged according to its effect on French sovereignty and its potential to strengthen the nationalists' cause. Debré concluded that the proposal was unacceptable because it could create a separate political power in Algeria and thus undermine French sovereignty. The nationalists' insistence on elections risked legitimising the rebellion if the government agreed to hold elections in Algeria.¹⁴⁰ In a statement reminiscent of Debré's earlier doubts about extending the franchise throughout the *Union*

¹⁴⁰ Michel Debré archives, 1DE24.7, 'Lettre aux Algériens fidèles', s.d. (1957), also published in revised form as 'Loi-cadre et double jeu', *Le Courrier de la Colère*, 5 (20.12.1957.)

française (see pp. 46-7), he thus refused to support the government's formula of 'cease-fire, elections, negotiations':

On nous parle d'un statut *négocié*, après des *élections dites libres*, trois mois après la fin de la pacification, au *collège unique*, et pouvant aboutir à un *exécutif* et à un *législatif algérien*. Si vous faites le lien entre toutes ces formules, qu'est-ce qui reste de l'Algérie française? ... Trois mois après la pacification, des élections libres? Il n'y a pas un Européen, un Musulman qui ne vous dise qu'il sera impossible, avant plusieurs années de faire une honnête consultation électorale. Si on veut la faire immédiatement après un 'cessez-le-feu', dans quelles conditions psychologiques, dans quelles conditions morales va-t-on l'organiser? D'autre-part, est-ce avec les personnes élues dans ces conditions qu'on discute un statut? ... C'est une contradiction, c'est contraire même au concept de l'Algérie liée à la France d'une manière définitive et partie intégrante de la communauté française.¹⁴¹

A second consequence of Debré's emphasis on the nature and role of the State and the Nation led him to question the very notion of independence for Algeria. He saw the cases of Tunisia and Morocco as proof that independent states could not exist in North Africa: Tunisia had fallen prey to Egyptian domination, while Morocco had become in effect an American protectorate.¹⁴² The Tunisian example, he told fellow Gaullists, demonstrated that in combating Algerian nationalism, they should present independence as a regression compared to the progress associated with French rule:

Il faut avoir le courage de dire que lorsque l'indépendance aboutit à donner pleins pouvoirs à un système féodal, totalitaire ou raciste, l'indépendance n'est pas un progrès; il faut avoir le courage de dire que quand la démocratie aboutit à organiser des élections avec un parti unique et un chef unique, c'est une régression terrible.¹⁴³

Only association with France could, therefore, guarantee to North Africa the rights and freedoms that the independence movements claimed to deliver, for the simple reason, according to Debré, that the Nation, in France, represented the principles of

¹⁴¹ Debré archives, IDE22, 4.1, speech, RS Congrès National, Bordeaux, February 1957

¹⁴² Debré archives, IDE23, 2.2, correspondence, Debré to M. Mousseau (mayor of Chaille), 24.7.1956

¹⁴³ Debré archives, IDE22, 4.1, speech, RS Congrès National, 1957

liberty and equality. In contrast, he argued, 'Il est peu de sociétés qui, sur le continent africain, méritent le nom de nation', because few African societies could claim the principles that France represented.¹⁴⁴ Algeria, in particular, could not be independent, quite simply because it could not be described as a Nation capable of constituting a State based on common values. Thus the Nation, to be defended in Europe against entangling alliances, was a concept wholly unsuited to African development: 'La nation, en Afrique, est un mot qui sonne faux. La négation de la Nation, en Europe, est un songe creux.'¹⁴⁵ Debré's sense of the primacy of the nation in France and Europe therefore set him firmly against any recognition of an Algerian nation, strengthening his resolve to defend the French nation against what he saw as a threat in the form of both Algerian independence and compromise with the wishes of European and American allies in this respect.

Debré's attack on the Fourth Republic began from the premise outlined above - that devolution, let alone independence, for Algeria was incompatible with French interests - and continued by developing arguments based on what Algeria meant for France. In this respect, too, his views echoed those of other Gaullists. Algeria was of value as a symbol both of French hope for the future and of continued security; Debré envisaged future emigration from France to Algeria as the vision of a prosperous southern extension to the nation became reality.¹⁴⁶ Like Soustelle, Debré held that the Algerian problem was too important to be addressed in terms of economics, and should instead be seen as a question of French security and *grandeur*: 'Qui tient l'Algérie peut tenir la Méditerranée occidentale, qui tient l'Algérie peut tenir le Sahara, qui tient Alger peut tenir l'Europe.'¹⁴⁷ Debré's typically Gaullist concerns on this issue were matched by his fears for France's future without Algeria: only the communists would benefit from France's 'retreat' to

¹⁴⁴ M. Debré, *Ces princes qui nous gouvernent* (Paris: Plon, 1957, 146)

¹⁴⁵ Debré, *Ces princes qui nous gouvernent*, p. 147

¹⁴⁶ Debré, 'L'enjeu de l'Algérie', *Courrier de la Colère*, 10 (24.1.1958)

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*

Europe, whether through exploiting economic hardship caused by immigration and the return of *pieds-noirs*, or by taking up the nationalist mantle abandoned by the other political forces and claiming to represent the Nation against an integrated Europe.¹⁴⁸ Internal security would, therefore, be threatened by the communists, and external security by the familiar process of anticolonialism opening up France's southern hinterland to communist influence. Debré thus embarked upon his crusade to discredit the regime and persuade public opinion of the crisis of security confidence and hope that the Nation was facing, a campaign that began in November 1957 with the launch of *Le Courrier de la Colère* and the publication of the pamphlet *Ces princes qui nous gouvernent*.

Debré's publications in the six months preceding the events of May 1958 have earned him a reputation as the Gaullist who led the assault on the Republic. The tone of his denunciations of the regime and his depictions of desperate crisis facing the nation has, in this respect, been described more frequently than the content of Debré's work has been analysed.¹⁴⁹ His intention in launching both publications was to 'profiter des circonstances', though he defends himself against charges of being interested only in bringing down the regime, claiming that *Ces princes qui nous gouvernent* was written in the hope that it would inspire those in government – the *princes* – to instigate reform themselves.¹⁵⁰ That both the *Courrier* and *Ces princes* were intended as rallying calls to Gaullists is clear, especially in the case of the newspaper, in which Debré was assisted by, among others, Raymond Dronne, Jacques Foccart, the RS deputy Jean-Baptiste Biaggi, future Gaullist minister Alexandre Sanguinetti, and veteran, *anciens résistants* and young Gaullist

¹⁴⁸ Debré archives, 1DE22, 4.2, notes, December 1956; 1DE23, 2.2, correspondence, Debré to Mousseau, 24.7.1956

¹⁴⁹ Debré's provocative headlines such as 'Jusqu'à la guillotine' (*Courrier de la colère*, 1 (23.11.1957)), 'Céderons-nous Toulon à l'OTAN?' (*Courrier de la colère*, 14 (21.2.1958)), or chapter headings like 'La logique du régime mène à la catastrophe' (*Ces princes*, p. 69) explain why he is generally seen as the Gaullist most strongly devoted to bringing down the regime, in addition to the conspiratorial reputation that alleged plots like the Bazooka affair had already earned him.

¹⁵⁰ Debré, *Trois républiques pour une France: mémoires*, vol. 2: agir (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988), pp. 275-6

movements.¹⁵¹ The *Courrier* dealt less with Algeria in its own right than with the weakness of the regime that it revealed: only two editorials focused directly on the Algerian situation, but every issue affirmed the need to keep Algeria French and the regime's inability to do so. De Gaulle, too, remained in the background until around April 1958, possibly for fear of alienating the numerous *pieds-noirs* and former communists and socialists who corresponded with the journal, though the notions expressed by Debré in his attacks on the regime were unmistakably Gaullist.

Ces princes qui nous gouvernent, drawing its title from Machiavelli's writings on *raison d'état*, also dealt more with the potential consequences of the regime's failure to reassert authority in Algeria than with the Algerian problem in its own right.

Echoing attacks in the 1930s on the small elite ruining France, Debré estimated at around 800 the number of 'princes' betraying Algeria and France through limited ambitions and lack of commitment: these princes were to be found in government, the civil service, political parties, trade unions, business, the press, the universities, the Church and freemasonry.¹⁵² Revolt, by the people against this self-serving and incompetent elite, was presented as a legitimate right and duty, in the interests of the Nation and in line with the heritage established by de Gaulle in 1940.¹⁵³

Debré's attack on the regime relied on demonstrating the threat to the French nation, through comparisons with other moments of crisis or revolution in French history, and promotion of a Gaullist alternative, against the background of the crisis in Algeria and its effect on the State. By 1958, he argued, what was at stake in Algeria was not only French *grandeur*, but the Nation itself, which Debré, like Soustelle, saw

¹⁵¹ Debré, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, pp. 282-4. Biaggi and Sanguinetti played key roles in the preparation of the May 13 events in Algiers, winning over *pieds-noirs* and veterans to the Gaullist cause. Biaggi also founded a political movement known first as the *Volontaires de l'Union française* and later as the *Parti patriote révolutionnaire*, devoted to bringing about de Gaulle's return, which recruited among war veterans, Pétainists and former RPF security forces, and was implicated in violent attacks on left-wing parties' meetings and offices. C. Nick, *Résurrection*, pp. 191-4

¹⁵² Debré, *Ces princes qui nous gouvernent*, pp. 2-12

¹⁵³ Debré, *Ces princes qui nous gouvernent*, pp. 197-200

as being in a serious state of decline and decadence.¹⁵⁴ French decline was contrasted with Portuguese grandeur under Salazar – the type of comparison that led many on the left to accuse the Gaullists of advocating something approaching fascism – on the grounds that Portugal had not only resisted any pressure to relax authority in its colonies, but had the fortune to be governed by a strong leader who assumed his responsibilities as defender of the West and opponent of any attempts to undermine the role of the Nation.¹⁵⁵ France's decline had gone on for so long, according to Debré, that the nation had now reached its last chance to restore its grandeur. This last chance was to be found in Algeria: 'Nos derniers atouts: l'Algérie et le Sahara, sans lesquels il n'y a plus de chances françaises dans le monde.'¹⁵⁶ Thus, if the regime could not save Algeria, it could not save France from decline. That the regime was not up to the task, even if it had good intentions, had already been made clear on several occasions by Debré:

Nous ne doutons pas de la bonne volonté et de la bonne foi des dirigeants actuels. Le problème est plus grave et il est posé en ces termes: est-ce que le régime est capable à la longue de garder l'Algérie? ... Il faut dépasser les critiques à l'adresse des hommes et des Gouvernements et poser le vrai problème ... La vérité est connue de tous: le régime n'est pas capable de garder l'Algérie, il ne sortira de l'immobilisme que pour sombrer dans l'abdication.¹⁵⁷

In May 1958, Debré saw his prediction come true with the investiture of Pierre Pflimlin as Prime Minister, which, he claimed, represented the regime's choice of shameful defeat over salvation.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ It must be noted that Debré did not attribute this decline exclusively to the Algerian crisis; his fervent opposition to European integration also informs much of his writing on the subject. However, after the Suez affair, European integration was seen as a policy pursued by governments resigned to a loss of influence in the rest of the world, and therefore as an unsatisfactory alternative to the French role in Africa.

¹⁵⁵ 'Déclin de la France et grandeur du Portugal', *Courrier de la Colère*, 21 (11.4.1958)

¹⁵⁶ *Courrier de la Colère*, 2 (29.11.1957)

¹⁵⁷ Debré archives, IDE22, 4.1, speech, RS Congrès National, Feb. 1957

¹⁵⁸ *Courrier de la Colère*, 26 (15.5.1958)

Given the regime's failure to defend France against decline, and the fact that it was deemed incapable of reforming itself, any revolt against it was to be encouraged. Thus the issue of sovereignty in Algeria raised by the *loi-cadre* became a test of the regime's ability to uphold the interests of the Nation, and any departure from the principle of sovereignty would therefore create a state of legitimate revolt: 'La désobéissance ne serait pas seulement justifiée. La désobéissance serait alors un devoir.'¹⁵⁹ Thus, the question of *Algérie française* came to represent a test of the regime's ability to defend not only Algeria but also the principle – sovereignty – at the heart of Debré's conception of the nation. This principle went beyond Algeria to encompass all the other key themes of Gaullism in the Fourth Republic: national independence without hindrance from international alliances, a resolve to defend France and French interests, and a strong State capable of representing the interests of the nation as a whole.

Debré's conviction that revolt against the regime was necessary resulted in sustained efforts to convince the nation of the link between the crisis in Algeria, the Fourth Republic's terminal decline, and the need for a new regime. His principal method of persuasion was historical comparison, embracing the 'loss' of French North America in 1763, the 1789 Revolution, and the Second World War. In each case, an analogy was found to relate the Algerian crisis to these decisive moments in the history of French aspirations to *grandeur*. Thus the Treaty of Paris of 1763, which followed the defeat at Québec in 1759, was likened to the treaties of the 1940s and 50s ceding the French Indian territories to India and the Fezzan province to Libya, and to the independence treaties signed with Indochina, Morocco and Tunisia. Furthermore, the two French defeats had a common cause: government indifference in the face of potential military success:

¹⁵⁹ Debré archives, IDE24.7, 'Lettre aux algériens fidèles', s.d. (Feb. 1958)

Montcalm au Canada tenait la victoire. A plusieurs reprises il s'adressa à la Cour de Versailles, la suppliant de comprendre. Versailles ne comprit jamais. Les Français du Canada connurent un affreux martyre et le Canada français fut perdu. Paris comprendra-t-il ce que Versailles n'a jamais compris?¹⁶⁰

The consequence of the loss of Canada, Debré argued, was the people's final realisation of the regime's decadence, thus creating the climate in which the 1789 Revolution occurred.¹⁶¹ Likewise, the Court in 1789 had behaved like the present regime, one refusing to call the Estates General while the other rejected all calls for constitutional reform: Prime Ministers Pinay, Faure, Pflimlin and Gaillard were described as the Necker and Calonne of their era.¹⁶²

That the 1789 Revolution was principally caused by the fall of Québec is debatable, and surely appeared so even to Debré's readers. The connection, nevertheless, was made between colonial disaster, government incompetence and dramatic change of regime.¹⁶³ A more familiar comparison, and one with more direct relevance to North Africa, was the defeat in 1940. In 1957, Debré still hoped a recurrence of the wartime defeat might be avoided in Algeria: 'Il faut espérer que nous n'irons pas jusqu'au mois de juin 1940', but by 1958 he felt the Gaullists' only option was to wait for a similar crisis to arise.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ *Courrier de la Colère*, 16 (6.3.1958) & 17 (13.3.1958)

¹⁶¹ *Courrier de la Colère*, 1 (23.11.1957). The Gaullists' subsequent interest in encouraging Québécois nationalism is beyond the scope of this study, but it has been suggested that the 'loss' of Algeria led de Gaulle to seek to reactivate France's former role in North America through promotion of the so-called *fait national français* in Québec.

¹⁶² *Courrier de la Colère*, 16 (6.3.1958) & 20 (3.4.1958). It might also be noted that, in May 1958, Debré again sought inspiration in pre-revolution history, comparing de Gaulle to Henri IV because of his ability to unite a divided nation. Debré archives, IDE24.7, 'Henri IV', 8.5.1958, also published in *Courrier de la Colère*, 26 (15.5.1958)

¹⁶³ Debré seemed to acknowledge the limitations of his comparison in practical terms, conceding, in November 1957, that revolt appeared unlikely because there was, as yet, no popular movement like in 1789. By May 1958, however, he had become confident that a popular movement could indeed be relied upon. *Courrier de la Colère*, 1 (23.11.1957) & 23 (24.4.1958)

¹⁶⁴ Debré archives, IDE23, 3.2, correspondence, Debré to M. Halna du Fretay, 11.1.1957; *Courrier de la Colère*, 24 (1.5.1958)

If Debré saw his principal contribution to the defence of French Algeria and all that it represented in 1957-8 as to persuade as many people as possible of the dangers facing the nation,¹⁶⁵ he also developed a number of valuable contacts that would be influential in May 1958. Among Gaullists, his activities consisted of a series of ‘banquets’ – whose very name recalls the prelude to the 1848 revolution – which were attended by all leading Gaullists except Chaban-Delmas and de Gaulle himself. The chief purpose of these meetings has been seen as the preparation of clandestine activities designed to turn the expected revolt in Algiers to the Gaullists’ advantage.¹⁶⁶ While this is surely an accurate judgement, the existing accounts of these banquets reveal that the dominant themes discussed were firstly North Africa, closely followed by the State, the Constitution, and Europe.¹⁶⁷ Debré was not active among the *pieds-noirs* in Algiers in the manner of Soustelle or Delbecq, but his arguments in the *Courrier* clearly attracted *pied-noir* support, as is seen by a number of letters of support received from *pieds-noirs*, even those who continued to assert their hostility to de Gaulle.¹⁶⁸ Other groups praised and cultivated by Debré in print were the military and the police: an article in praise of the Algiers’ police’s activities during the Second World War – admittedly not written by Debré himself – appeared in the *Courrier*, while the newspaper, in more general terms, devoted an increasing

¹⁶⁵ Debré archives, 1DE23, 3.2, correspondence, Debré to P. Debougnée, 14.1.1957

¹⁶⁶ These meetings of senior Gaullists are described by J. Ferniot, *De Gaulle et le 13 mai* (Paris: Plon, 1965), p. 117; S. Bernstein & P. Milza, *Histoire de la France au XX^e siècle, 1945-1958* (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), p. 298; P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle: entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard* (Paris: Fayard/Jeune Afrique, 1995), pp. 133-4. All these accounts convey a sense of expectation among the Gaullists, and of preparation for an inevitable revolt in Algiers, though there is no evidence of their actual organisation of such an event. P. Bourdrel, *La dernière chance de l’Algérie française: du gouvernement socialiste au retour de de Gaulle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996), p. 213, makes reference to the meeting, in Nice in March 1958, of the senior Gaullists and Alain de Sérigny, editor of *l’Echo d’Alger*, widely credited with bringing about the *pieds-noirs*’ temporary conversion to the Gaullist cause in May 1958.

¹⁶⁷ Debré archives, 1DE22, 4.2. The programme cited here is that for the banquet held in Nice on March 16, 1958, attended by Debré, Soustelle, Michelet, Triboulet and Léon Teisseire (Vice-president of the RS group in the Senate). Triboulet claims that the Gaullists’ meeting with de Sérigny (note 176) took place on the same day, though no mention is made of the *Echo d’Alger* editor in Debré’s papers.

¹⁶⁸ *Courrier de la Colère*, 5 (20.12.1957) contains an illuminating example of Debré’s campaign’s appeal in Algeria; a certain Abbé V. Serralda of Algiers writes: ‘M. de Gaulle est coupable d’avoir combattu dans la Province algérienne les bons sujets et les respectables agents de la souveraineté française. M. de Gaulle est responsable du Tripartisme qui liquéfie la belle Nation française.’ Serralda goes on, however, to praise Debré’s efforts for the Nation and request a subscription to the *Courrier*.

amount of space to the concerns of the army in Algeria – supporting its complaints about budgets and equipment, for example – from February 1958, shortly after warmly praising the air force's actions at Sakiet.¹⁶⁹

Given Debré's role in creating an atmosphere of *salut public* before May 1958, his views on what exactly Gaullism meant merit some attention, in order to determine how representative he was of mainstream Gaullist thought at this time. Two themes emerge in Debré's relations with Gaullism: firstly, attempts to distance himself from parliamentary Gaullism, and secondly, efforts to reinforce to the public the identification of Gaullism and the Nation that is apparent in much of his own thought. In June 1956, Debré anticipated the future discontent among most Gaullists with the idea of participation in government and resigned from the RS *Comité exécutif* and *Comité directeur* in protest at the Gaullists' relations with the regime.¹⁷⁰ A month later, he envisaged the creation of a parliamentary 'intergroupe' – which could extend beyond Gaullist members – for the sake of putting pressure on the government over Algeria.¹⁷¹ Gaullism, for Debré, now had to assert its claim to represent the Nation, in order to present a credible alternative and offer hope of a solution to the Algerian crisis. In 1957, Debré had explained that 'Nous ne sommes pas gaullistes simplement par fidélité sentimentale à une personne ... Nous sommes, nous devons être gaullistes par raison d'Etat',¹⁷² identifying firmly with the so-called *gaullistes de raison* rather than the *gaullistes de foi* (see pp. 29-30).¹⁷³ He also thus clarified an important difference, in terms of response to the Algerian crisis, between himself and the other intellectual leader of Gaullism, Jacques Soustelle. While Soustelle forged alliances among *pieds-noirs* and metropolitan activists in the name

¹⁶⁹ P. Combes, 'Vérités sur la police algérienne', *Courrier de la Colère*, 3 (6.12.1957.)

¹⁷⁰ Debré archives, IDE23, 3.1, correspondence, Debré to Dronne, 23.6.1956

¹⁷¹ Debré archives, IDE23, 3.1, correspondence, Debré to Labonne, 24.7.1956

¹⁷² Debré archives, IDE22, 4.1, speech, RS *Congrès National*, 1957

¹⁷³ These categories of Gaullists were mirrored in an article by Debré in April 1958, which claimed that a combination of the sentiment inspired by faith in de Gaulle, and rational political action was required in the interests of the Nation. Debré, 'Gaullismes, antigaulismes, pseudogaullismes', *Courrier de la Colère*, 20 (3.4.1958)

of *Algérie française*, Debré instead conducted a campaign based on arguments about the effect of the crisis on the State, lending verbal rather than practical support to non-Gaullist forces because of his conviction that only the creation of a new regime based on Gaullist principles could resolve the Algerian problem in a satisfactory manner.

If Gaullism represented the salvation of the Nation in its time of crisis, those representing the regime had to be strongly condemned as both antigaullists and opposed to the interests of France. Therefore, in a piece of typically sensationalist Debré rhetoric, the members of the 'system' were described as 'professionnels de l'anti-gaullisme' and denounced in uncompromising terms: 'Les germanomanes avec leur Europe dirigée par l'Allemagne. De Clovis à René Coty, il y a toujours eu les partisans de l'étranger.'¹⁷⁴ Debré's interest in discrediting even president Coty – generally seen as an ally in despair at the regime's weakness, and who played a crucial role in de Gaulle's return by threatening to resign in May 1958 if de Gaulle were not invested – lay in the fact that, in order to present a government of public safety as the only solution to the nation's problems, Gaullism had to appear as the only political force truly acting in the national interest. By April, the notion of a government of public safety was defined for Debré's readers as holding complete authority, free of party politics, and representing a 'sens national' and, above all, 'le prestige', qualities that even the Presidency could not claim under the Fourth Republic, in Debré's view.¹⁷⁵

Debré, as has been seen, did more than any other Gaullist to establish the link between crisis in Algeria, crisis for the Nation, and a credible Gaullist alternative. Yet it must be remembered that Gaullist support in France appeared relatively low, and that even if a revolt did take place in Algiers, the Gaullists would be far from the

¹⁷⁴ 'Les professionnels de l'anti-gaullisme', *Courrier de la Colère*, 1 (23.11.1957)

¹⁷⁵ 'Qu'appelle-t-on gouvernement de salut public?', *Courrier de la Colère*, 23 (24.4.1958)

most likely beneficiaries. To deal with this problem, Debré gradually introduced the name of de Gaulle into his assault on the regime, despite the risk of alienating some potential supporters. De Gaulle's name was first mentioned in the *Courrier* in December 1957, but it was not until the spring of 1958 that the idea that the General represented a credible alternative to the Fourth Republic was fully developed. De Gaulle was identified initially with the salvation of *Algérie française*, through articles such as 'De Gaulle, c'est la sauvegarde de l'Algérie', which argued that only de Gaulle could provide the authority needed to defend the Nation and its interests in North Africa.¹⁷⁶ The link between de Gaulle as saviour of Algeria and a change of regime was first made in an opinion poll published in the *Courrier* in March 1958, showing large numbers of respondents in favour both of *Algérie française* and de Gaulle.¹⁷⁷ By May 1958, the change of regime had replaced Algeria as the dominant feature of Debré's promotion of de Gaulle. The emphasis, by this time, was firmly on the General's historic mission to restore the State and rescue France. The *Algérie française* argument, after May 13, was clearly considered to have been won and the remaining task for the Gaullists was to ensure that it now merged with their campaign for de Gaulle's return.

¹⁷⁶ 'De Gaulle, c'est la sauvegarde de l'Algérie', *Courrier de la Colère*, 13 (14.2.1958). De Gaulle's speeches and memoirs were also quoted extensively to demonstrate his *Algérie française* credentials, such as 'La France, quoi qu'il arrive, n'abandonnera pas l'Algérie' (from speech of 18.8.1947), quoted in *Courrier de la Colère*, 18 (20.3.1958)

¹⁷⁷ *Courrier de la Colère*, 19 (27.3.1958). No source or details were given for this opinion poll, nor for another poll result published in May 1958 showing a majority in favour of de Gaulle. *Courrier de la Colère*, 26 (15.5.1958).

CHAPTER 9

MAY 1958: GAULLISM'S RETURN TO POWER

Debré's attacks on the regime, accompanied by the efforts of other Gaullists in parliament and in the country as a whole,¹ ensured that when the Gaillard government fell, in April 1958, the name of de Gaulle was raised as a possible solution to the crisis of authority in Paris. However, the Gaullists who have been discussed in the preceding chapters were operating almost exclusively in metropolitan France – only Soustelle had first-hand experience of the situation in Algeria – and the European population in Algeria, from which any revolt against the regime would most likely arise, had, since 1951, shown few signs of becoming Gaullist. Thus, the connection between Gaullism and a solution to the Algerian problem, which the Gaullists had been attempting to demonstrate since 1954, remained unclear in Algeria. This chapter will therefore look at the events leading to de Gaulle's investiture as Prime Minister on June 1, 1958, in the context of what these events reveal about the success of the Gaullists' attempts to develop a coherent policy on Algeria and to present Gaullism as the solution to the crisis in both Algeria and France.

In February 1958, Jacques Chaban-Delmas created an 'antenne' of the Defence Ministry in Algiers, ostensibly to oversee the implementation of psychological warfare tactics, but widely seen as an attempt to develop contacts between the Gaullists, the army and local political movements, in order to take advantage of any

¹ Alongside Debré's efforts in favour of de Gaulle, former RPF organiser André Astoux had initiated a campaign of letters from Gaullists throughout France to President Coty calling for the General's return, and Jacques Dauer had arranged for the young Gaullists' associations in most towns to simultaneously put up posters, on April 26, with the appeal: 'Appelons de Gaulle et la France sera la France.' These campaigns certainly helped raise awareness of the possibility that de Gaulle might return to power to resolve the crisis, but said nothing about the situation in Algeria or how de Gaulle was to solve the problems there. Around the same time, Gaullists began to make reference in public to the idea that de Gaulle might return. All these measures, however, as René Rémond has observed, were: 'témoignages de fidélité plus qu'initiatives politiques'. R. Rémond, *1958: Le retour de de Gaulle*, (Brussels: Complexe, 1983), p 57; A. Astoux, *L'oubli: de Gaulle 1946-1958* (Paris: J.C. Lattès, 1974); J. Dauer & M. Rodet, *Le 13 mai sans complots*, (Paris: La Pensée Moderne), 1959, pp. 100-1

protest movement arising in Algiers. Léon Delbecque, head of the RS in the Nord department, was appointed to this post. Delbecque, who held no significant position in the Gaullist movement before or after 1958, thus became the most important figure in the events that led to de Gaulle's return. He developed contacts in Algiers and formed a 'Comité de Vigilance' composed of *pied-noir* activists including veterans, *militaires* and students, which alarmed the government and the army command sufficiently for Resident-General Lacoste and Commander-in-Chief Salan to request that Delbecque be removed from Algeria. In April 1958, the Gaillard government fell and no successor was found for five weeks, giving rise to a sense that the Fourth Republic's final crisis was approaching. Around this time, calls from the public and individual politicians from different parties for de Gaulle's return became common, though the General himself apparently still discounted any prospect of returning to power. What was clear, in any case, was that de Gaulle would not return within the Fourth Republic 'system'; the calls for the General's return, therefore, effectively became calls for the end of the regime, thereby echoing the sentiments not only of the Gaullists but also of the *pieds-noirs* and much of the army in Algeria.

In Algeria, the fall of the government exacerbated the power vacuum that had existed since the 1956 elections had been cancelled, leaving no authority other than Lacoste and Salan, a situation that worsened on May 10 when Lacoste returned to Paris. On May 13, a crowd, led by student activist Pierre Lagailarde, with the military doing nothing to prevent it, seized control of the Governor-General's building. In the ensuing chaos a Committee of Public Safety was formed under the auspices of General Massu, including Delbecque and his supporters alongside non-Gaullist *pied-noir* activists. For Delbecque and the Gaullists in Paris, the next step was to launch a call for de Gaulle to return to power to restore order, but the National Assembly instead finally invested Pierre Pflimlin as Prime Minister. The Gaullists, therefore, had to find a way of turning what was essentially a *pied-noir* and military revolt to

their advantage. On May 15, Delbecque persuaded Salan to issue an appeal to de Gaulle, while the arrival of Soustelle in Algiers, two days later, inspired hopes that the crisis would lead to the General's return. Soustelle's presence in Algiers was crucial: as defender of *Algérie française* and hero of the *pieds-noirs*, he was able to temporarily unite the settlers and the army in the belief that only de Gaulle could guarantee the future of French Algeria.

In Paris, meanwhile, de Gaulle announced that he was prepared to form a government according to official procedures, attempting to reassure those who saw him as a dictator-in-waiting acting on behalf of a rebellious army. However, a majority could not be found in parliament in favour of de Gaulle's investiture, and General Massu put in place a plan, named Operation Resurrection, for a military operation in Paris, directed from bases in Algeria and south-west France, in order to force the government and the President to accept de Gaulle. With no progress being made towards de Gaulle's investiture, on May 24 a military force from Algeria took control of Corsica, with the co-operation of the local Gaullist deputy Pascal Arrighi. This produced a greater sense of urgency in Paris, culminating in the crucial acceptance, on the part of Pflimlin and Socialist leader Mollet, of de Gaulle's return to power, and finally President Coty's threat to resign if the National Assembly did not elect de Gaulle as Prime Minister with full powers for six months.

The events of May 1958 are problematic in two respects for the study of Gaullist views on Algeria. Firstly, the unorthodox nature of the events in Algiers and Paris means that reliable evidence is hard to find.² The second problem facing the historian

² The vast majority of source material on May 1958 consists of memoirs of those involved which, though of some historical interest, often present contrasting views of the subject, notably concerning the relative importance of Gaullists, *pieds-noirs* and the army. Some of the most reliable and well-informed studies of the May 1958 events, indeed, remain those written by observers at the time, because of the range of participants interviewed and the accuracy of recollection, though such accounts do lack the historical perspective needed to set the events in wider context. The most useful examples of works of this kind are: M&S. Bromberger, *Les 13 complots du 13 mai* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1959); J. Ferniot, *De Gaulle et le 13 mai* (Paris: Plon, 1965); J.R. Tournoux *Secrets d'Etat*, (Paris: Plon, 1960; repr. Paris: 10/18, 1962). P.M. Williams, 'The Fourth Republic: murder or

of Gaullism in respect of May 1958 is that of determining the precise extent and nature of Gaullist involvement. The Gaullists in Algiers were only able to operate in co-operation with the *pieds-noirs* and the army. It must therefore be determined how important their role in influencing events was, and at which stages of the three-week long crisis of authority the Gaullists played an important part. The most difficult issue to resolve, in this respect, is that of Gaullist approval of Operation Resurrection. De Gaulle was constantly kept informed of developments, and is widely reported to have authorised the operation in the event that parliament refused to elect him as Prime Minister. However, it is also acknowledged that de Gaulle had no interest in returning to power as the champion of a military rebellion, and that the only role he was prepared to accept was that of national arbiter, recalled to power by constitutional means in a time of crisis.

If de Gaulle's behaviour in May 1958 appears typically ambiguous, that of the Gaullists is easier to describe, though no more conclusive. Gaullist contacts with *pieds-noirs*, the military and other political forces can be ascertained from a number of sources, and these can at least reveal something about the state of Gaullist views on Algeria and the regime, by demonstrating which positions they were willing to be associated with. Gaullist declarations of opinion on the Algerian problem are virtually absent, however, from accounts of May 1958. In seeking alliances and winning support, the Gaullists relied on arguments they had already developed in the

suicide', in P.M. Williams, *Wars, Plots and Scandals in Post-war France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 129-66 illustrates the problems created by the abundance of sources based on first-hand accounts and recollections. Among more recently published secondary accounts, the most useful are those that rely on primary source material made available to the authors. However, even in this case the story of May 1958 remains incomplete, as too many official primary sources are lacking for a complete picture of the revolt in Algiers and the proposed military operations in mainland France to be drawn. See, for example, O. Rudelle, *Mai 58: De Gaulle et la République* (Paris: Plon, 1988); C. Nick, *Résurrection. Naissance de la Vème République: un coup d'Etat démocratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1998). Nick relies on military documents in his possession relating to the 'Resurrection' operation, while Rudelle's account is based on private interviews with several participants in May 1958. These interviews, however, have not been made available to researchers, despite their being conducted under the auspices of the *Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques*. Rudelle's work has therefore acquired the status of the 'definitive' account of May 1958, while the general lack of primary sources contributes to the proliferation of rumours and conspiracy theories.

previous years of debate, the argument in favour of *Algérie française* being assumed to have already been won.

It is clear that a number of plots and conspiracies existed in Gaullist, *pied-noir*, military and extreme-right circles in May 1958. The immediate historical interest for this study, however, is not to provide a detailed account of the actions of the various participants, but rather to determine how the Gaullists succeeded in persuading traditionally antigaullist military and *pied-noir* communities to support their cause. The revolt of May 13 in Algiers, commonly seen as the beginning of the process that led to the founding of the Fifth Republic, cannot be accurately described as Gaullism in action. Very few of those involved in the seizure of the Governor-General's building in Algiers were Gaullists. Indeed, Léon Delbecque, the Gaullist with most responsibility for the events, has accused other Gaullists of failing to fulfil their promises of support. Thus, not only were the events of May 13 conducted by a majority that was not Gaullist – hardly a surprise in Algiers – but the Gaullists' role in the events may even have been overestimated in the light of subsequent events.³

The Gaullists sought, in 1958, to reactivate old contacts in Algeria. The RS federation in Algiers gradually became active, having been virtually silent since its foundation in September 1955; meetings began to be held again from February 1958.⁴ Delbecque's arrival in Algiers was the catalyst for this, as he received instructions from Chaban-Delmas not only to develop military and *pied-noir* contacts, but also to rebuild the local RS.⁵ The Gaullists therefore clearly anticipated a movement in which a local body of support might be useful. According to a report

³ L. Delbecque, 'Mon 13 mai', in G. Guilleminault et. al., *De Bardot à de Gaulle: le roman vrai de la IV^e République* (Paris: Denoël, 1972), pp. 321-66. Delbecque's account, like all others of May 13, is not entirely reliable, with its emphasis on the unique and decisive contribution of Delbecque himself. It is, however, revealing that he seeks to demonstrate that, far from being a Gaullist revolt, the events were notable for the absence of mass Gaullist support.

⁴ RS archives (Paris: Fondation Charles de Gaulle), H.J. Tümmers, 'Das "Centre National des Républicains Sociaux": Eine Gaullistische Partei unter der IV. Republik' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universität Augsburg, 1980), p. 250

⁵ Tümmers, p. 249

of June 1958, the reorganisation of the RS had been conducted 'en vue notamment d'une action plus intense et d'une collaboration à un éventuel mouvement de défense de la France dans ce pays.'⁶ However, it would be wrong to conclude that this constitutes definitive evidence of careful Gaullist planning for a seizure of power in May 1958. The Gaullists were by no means the only politicians anticipating some kind of mass movement or revolt in Algiers in 1958, and their numbers remained small compared to the numbers of *pieds-noirs* involved in the various *Algérie française* organisations. Old Gaullist-*pied-noir* contacts made at the time of the RPF were renewed in 1958, chiefly in the form of the local branch of the USRAF.⁷ In Paris, however, the USRAF was somewhat distanced from the Gaullists, some of whom considered it a possible threat.⁸ Delbecque's 'Comité de Vigilance', indeed, was based on the small group of Gaullists who had been active in Algiers before the Allied landings in 1942 and had been involved, alongside Soustelle, in the intrigues surrounding the assassination of Darlan and the agreement between de Gaulle and Giraud.⁹ However, the majority of Gaullist contacts in Algiers were made with veterans, *pied-noir* political groups, and the army. In Paris, too, the Gaullists were by no means only working in co-operation with colleagues, though the exact role played by Gaullists in France does shed some light on their role in channelling the revolt of Algiers into a Gaullist political triumph.

All the leading figures of Fourth Republic Gaullism were involved in developing contacts and turning events to de Gaulle's advantage in May 1958. Among senior Gaullists, Debré, Soustelle and Foccart were most prominent, while much of the organising and co-ordinating of the Gaullists' various allies was done by more minor

⁶ Tümmers, p. 250

⁷ F. Barthélémy, 'Le Gaullism et l'Algérie au temps du RPF, 1947-1955' (unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1997), p. 112; *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 428 (14.5.1958)

⁸ P. Gaillard, *Foccart parle: entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard* (Paris: Fayard/Jeune Afrique, 1995), p. 134; J. Dauer & M. Rodet, *Le 13 mai sans complots*, p. 168

⁹ Rudelle, p. 138. A typical example of the small group of *pied-noir* Gaullists is René Vinciguerra, who had been active in the Algerian RPF during the early years of the Fourth Republic (see p. 36). Delbecque, however, insists that the number of actual Gaullists in Algiers was always too small to be of any importance alone. Delbecque, p. 327

figures such as Pascal Arrighi, Guy Ribeaud, Lucien Neuwirth, Jacques Dauer, Pierre Lefranc and Olivier Guichard.¹⁰ Thus the leaders of the Gaullists' efforts were Soustelle, the staunchest *Algérie française* supporter, Debré, the developer of the idea that *Algérie française* could save the Nation, and Foccart, the Gaullists' chief expert on colonial questions. The leadership of the Gaullists' activities was certainly composed of those with a strong attachment to *Algérie française*. Soustelle and Foccart, indeed, had shown much more interest in colonial affairs than the question of the change of regime, while Debré had certainly established his credentials as defender of Algeria. The argument advanced by most supporters of conspiracy theories to explain the Gaullists' behaviour in May 1958 – that they merely took advantage of the *Algérie française* campaign to bring down the Fourth Republic and return de Gaulle to power – does not appear to be supported by analysis of the leading participants' views on Algeria as seen in preceding chapters.¹¹ Furthermore, among the Gaullists who were prominent during the Fourth Republic, but who played little part in May 1958, were figures like Fouchet, Terrenoire, Georges Catroux and Michelet, all of whom had shown less attachment to Algeria. Even Jacques Chaban-Delmas, having played an important role in sending Delbecq to Algiers, does not feature prominently in accounts of Gaullist behaviour in May

¹⁰ According to Lefranc, a precise division of responsibilities among Gaullists existed, with Guichard responsible for liaison with politicians, Foccart for contacts with the military, and Lefranc for information and organisation. P. Lefranc, *Avec qui vous savez: vingt-cinq ans avec de Gaulle* (Paris: Plon, 1979), p. 121. In addition, Foccart asserts that Dauer and his collaborators played essentially a secondary, supporting role, and were not part of the Gaullist leaders in May 1958. Gaillard, pp. 130-1. There seems, therefore, to have been a division between Gaullist leaders and activists in the May events, with the possible exception of Foccart, who maintained the widest range of contacts. For details of the Gaullists' exact involvement in May 1958, see Rudelle, pp. 136-41, along with the memoirs of most Gaullists: P. Arrighi, *La Corse – atout décisive* (Paris: Plon, 1958); A. Astoux, *L'oubli*; Dauer & Rodet, *Le 13 mai sans complots*; M. Debré, *Trois républiques pour une France: mémoires*, vol. 2: 1946-1958: *Agir* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988); R. Dronne, *La révolution d'Alger* (Paris: France-Empire, 1958); Gaillard, *Foccart parle*; O. Guichard, *Mon général* (Paris: Grasset, 1980); Lefranc, *Avec qui vous savez*; J. Soustelle, *L'espérance trahie, 1958-1961* (Paris: Editions de l'Alma, 1962); R. Triboulet, *Un gaulliste de la IVème*, (Paris: Plon, 1985). Many military memoirs also relate the 1958 events, but they tend to be less reliable, frequently being written after Algerian independence by officers who felt betrayed by de Gaulle.

¹¹ The argument that May 1958 was simply a pretext for the Gaullists, or that a military revolt was taken over for their own ends, has been advanced by disillusioned military figures who were committed to *Algérie française*, as well as by some on the left like Mitterrand and Mendès-France, who accused the Gaullists of simply manufacturing a crisis in Algiers to mount a coup d'Etat.

1958.¹² Chaban-Delmas, too, was not one of the Gaullists' most vocal spokesmen on Algeria, and has claimed, indeed, not to have taken much interest in colonial questions during the Fourth Republic.¹³ The Gaullist ringleaders in May 1958, therefore, were clearly drawn from among those most strongly committed to *Algérie française*.

The less senior Gaullists involved in May 1958 often played crucial roles. Guichard, for example, was responsible for liaison with de Gaulle, while Ribeaud and Neuwirth maintained links between Delbecque in Algiers and the leaders in Paris. Arrighi, meanwhile, was instrumental in the rallying of Corsica to the revolt, while Dauer was chiefly responsible for ensuring that any nationalist movements on the far right were sidelined in favour of appeals to de Gaulle. Much of the work carried out by these Gaullists was achieved in conjunction with departmental federations or young Gaullist associations composed of party activists motivated, in most cases, by attachment to de Gaulle himself. Likewise, Guichard, Ribeaud and Neuwirth were typical of the so-called *gaullistes de foi*, attracted to Gaullism by admiration for de Gaulle, especially the Resistance legacy and the unrelenting opposition to the Fourth Republic. The Gaullist leaders in May 1958, therefore, were those with a strongly held and coherently developed argument for the importance of *Algérie française*; they were assisted, in most cases, by the kind of Gaullists motivated principally by de Gaulle himself, though their support for French Algeria is also not in doubt. Thus the Gaullists, in May 1958 as in the preceding years, combined rational defence of the French presence in Algeria with the more emotional belief in de Gaulle's rightful place at the head of the nation.

¹² Foccart claims that Chaban-Delmas was deliberately not involved by the Gaullists in their activities of May 1958, because of his position in the government. Gaillard, p. 134

¹³ O. Wieviorka, *Nous entrerons dans la carrière: de la résistance à l'exercice du pouvoir* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), p. 304

The role of de Gaulle himself in the Gaullists' attempts to combine *Algérie française* and Gaullism in May 1958 is ambiguous. His attitude to the 'Resurrection' operation is probably the most studied aspect of the whole episode, and will be examined below in relation to Gaullist-military relations. Even after May 13, the General showed little sign of directly supporting the Gaullists' activism, though the effect it generated in the political world undoubtedly benefited him. He warned both Foccart and Lefranc, however, not to involve themselves in any further plots or conspiracies after his statement that he was prepared to form a government.¹⁴ In general, de Gaulle appears to have shown more enthusiasm for plans presented to him by more minor Gaullists such as Neuwirth, who can be considered to show less personal ambition or ideological commitment to any position on Algeria, than to the likes of Soustelle. De Gaulle is reported to have assured Neuwirth that he would respond to any appeal that Delbecque might make in Algiers, but he refused to issue any endorsement of Soustelle's plans to go to Algiers and attempt to gain control of the *pied-noir* and military revolt.¹⁵

The Gaullists in Paris and Algiers could not have achieved control of the revolt without the co-operation of *pieds-noirs*, veterans groups in Algeria and France, and the military. In addition, they needed the acquiescence, if not the active co-operation, of rival political movements in France, in order to impose de Gaulle as the solution to the crisis. Veterans in Algeria were rallied to the Gaullist cause by Delbecque, via the 'Comité de vigilance'. Once integrated into Delbecque's networks, the veterans could then be relied upon to spread the message that de Gaulle would guarantee both

¹⁴ Gaillard, p. 141; Lefranc, p. 116

¹⁵ Rudelle, pp. 140-1, 163. Soustelle did go to Algiers, on May 17, with de Gaulle's failure to support him apparently not delaying him, though Debré reports that Soustelle decided to remain in Paris for a short time, while Foccart insists that Soustelle was merely prevented from going to Algiers immediately by a lack of transport. Debré, p. 305; Gaillard, pp. 137-8. De Gaulle's apparent reluctance to support Soustelle might be seen as evidence of the General's continuing suspicion of Soustelle's ambitions, which had first been aroused in 1952 with Soustelle's interest in becoming Prime Minister, in addition to the frequently offered interpretation that de Gaulle did not share Soustelle's commitment to Algeria. It is also important to note that Soustelle's subsequent split with Gaullism and discrediting in the eyes of Gaullists may have led some Gaullists to portray Soustelle's relations with de Gaulle in May 1958 in a less favourable light.

the maintenance of *Algérie française* and an end to the political crisis in Paris. This committee, seen as a forerunner of a future Committee of Public Safety, was created with the intention of bringing together as many different groups in Algiers as possible, at the end of Delbecque's process of establishing contacts in *pied-noir* circles.¹⁶ Thus, the Gaullists actively sought co-operation from groups such as veterans, students and even Poujadists from early 1958, rather than merely finding common cause with them at the time of the May events. In France, also, veterans' support was sought for a possible popular movement in favour of de Gaulle. In particular, the *Anciens Combattants de l'Union Française* (ACUF), successors to the *Anciens d'Indochine*, who had already been linked with Gaullist plans to overthrow the Republic in May 1954, were closely connected with Gaullist activists. ACUF president Yves Gignac – also involved in the May 1954 events – was a member of a group of nationalist figures organised by Debré and Dauer into a potential source of support for de Gaulle.¹⁷ Many veterans were more Pétainist than Gaullist, and it would be wrong to imply that groups like the ACUF became Gaullist in 1958. Rather, the combination of arguments in favour of *Algérie française* and the end of the Fourth Republic struck a chord with veterans, particularly Indochina veterans, and by May 1958 the Gaullists' efforts to link the two causes in the name of de Gaulle had evidently succeeded.¹⁸

While the veterans' associations provided an important body of potential activists in the event of any concerted action in favour of de Gaulle being deemed necessary, the Gaullists, reduced to only 4% of electoral support in 1956, also needed to win popular support for their final assault on the Fourth Republic. It was for this reason –

¹⁶ Delbecque, pp. 327-8

¹⁷ Nick, pp. 194, 518.

¹⁸ The appeal of Gaullism to veterans was also enhanced by the presence among Gaullist activists of some figures who seemed to have more in common with the nationalist right than mainstream Gaullism, such as Alexandre Sanguinetti, a *pied-noir* charged with liaison with veterans and described by Debré's collaborator, Melnik, as 'fascisant' and by Dauer as 'rétrograde'. Nick, p. 519, Dauer & Rodet, p. 51. Despite this, however, Sanguinetti was in close contact with Foccart, who was responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the various veterans groups rallying to the Gaullist cause. Gaillard, pp. 134-5

as well as its state of tension and history of protest – that Algiers was considered the most likely location for a Gaullist-led movement. The Gaullists had a number of reasons to be optimistic about their chances of making inroads into the traditionally antigaullist settler community more successfully than the RPF's attempts to find an electoral breakthrough before 1951. After the cancellation of the 1956 elections, the *pieds-noirs*' form of political expression had been local committees and pressure groups, which were in any case well-suited to the settlers' mistrust of metropolitan-style party politics. Thus, the Gaullists were faced with a situation in which, if one of the *pied-noir* groupings could be influenced, others could be expected to follow suit, and they could hope to derive some benefit from their opposition to the system in France among the antiparliamentarian *pieds-noirs*.¹⁹ Delbecque succeeded in winning over many *pied-noir* organisations to his 'antenne', though he is reticent as to the means he employed or the arguments with which he lowered the settlers' traditional defences towards de Gaulle.²⁰ Alain de Sérigny, editor of the *Echo d'Alger*, issued a public appeal to de Gaulle on May 10, which can be seen as a consequence of the assurances he had received from senior Gaullists including Debré and Soustelle in March 1958 regarding de Gaulle's commitment to Algeria (see p. 234). Along with de Sérigny, one of the most important individual in attracting *pieds-noirs* to Gaullism was Colonel Thomazo, a war veteran and commander of the *Unités Territoriales* – the *pied-noir* civilian defence organisations that had appeared in Algiers from 1956 – and a member of Delbecque's 'Comité de Vigilance'. Thomazo's 'conversion' to the Gaullist cause can be seen as the crucial link between

¹⁹ After May 13, an official report on the political situation in Algeria concluded that the absence of formal political structures in Algiers had indeed been an important contributory factor in the channelling of the settlers' concerns in a revolutionary direction, as the small groups that existed were easily controlled by activists. Archives de l'Armée de Terre, Délégation Générale du Gouvernement en Algérie: Bureau d'Etudes, 'Evolution politique des milieux européens d'Algérie 1954-1959', s.d.

²⁰ According to Delbecque, the purpose of re-establishing an RS group in Algiers was not principally to advance the Gaullist cause, but rather to inspire other political movements to make themselves known and operate in a more concerted and organised way. Delbecque, p. 327

Delbecque's 'Antenne' and the parallel *pied-noir* and military 'Groupe des sept' that was also planning a popular revolt in the name of *Algérie française*.²¹

The events of May 1958 have often been portrayed as becoming essentially a joint Gaullist-military operation, once the *pieds-noirs*' initial activism had been used to instigate the revolt of May 13. While it is true that the military quickly took control of events in Algiers and the Gaullists came to the political foreground in Paris after that date, it is less certain that a great deal of contact existed between Gaullists and the military in Algiers during this period. In Paris, Gaullists were in close contact with senior military figures over two issues: the army's response to the prospect of de Gaulle's return, and the means of ensuring that the 'Resurrection' operation could be put into practice should de Gaulle not be able to assume power. In Algiers, however, most of the Gaullist-military contacts took place before May 13, Commander-in-Chief Salan's call to Paris for a 'national arbiter' being followed, on May 15, by his 'Vive de Gaulle', which effectively handed the initiative back to Paris and marked the triumph of the Gaullists' work to persuade the army that its interests in Algeria coincided with those of Gaullism.²² Salan appears to have been somewhat reluctant to call upon de Gaulle, though Delbecque had already, on May 9, convinced him to address a telegram to President Coty – France had been without a government since April 15 – calling for 'un gouvernement fermement décidé à maintenir notre drapeau en Algérie'.²³ However, by the time of Soustelle's arrival in Algiers on May 17, Salan and Massu were distinctly hostile to his presence, fearing

²¹ Rudelle, p. 159. The common ground between Thomazo and Delbecque must not, however, be interpreted as evidence that the entire 'groupe des sept' was sympathetic to the Gaullist cause; other members of this group, such as Pierre Lagailarde, never rallied to Gaullism, however briefly.

²² The Gaullists quickly realised that the decisive decisions would now be made in Paris. Debré, who had considered going to Algiers, was told by de Gaulle at this stage to remain in the capital. Debré, p. 305

²³ Rudelle, pp. 156-7. Salan's memoirs, written after his engagement in the OAS, make no reference to the Gaullist origins of this message, though several other sources confirm Delbecque's involvement. Delbecque, moreover, claims that the text of the message had been cleared with Guichard and Foccart in Paris, via General Ely, who played an important role in liaison between the army, the Gaullists and President Coty after May 13. Salan, *Mémoires: fin d'un empire*, vol. 3: *Algérie française* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1972), pp. 284-6; Delbecque, p. 332

that to politicise the situation would damage the army's unity and undermine the control that they had achieved since May 13.²⁴ Once in Algiers, Soustelle was in contact not with other Gaullists, but rather with the *pieds-noirs* of the local USRAF.²⁵ However, Salan and Massu were by now convinced that, as they sought to restore order, neither *pied-noir* political movements nor more rebellious generals were welcome. Likewise, the apparent complicity of sections of the army in Algiers on May 13 – notably the parachute regiment – has been interpreted as evidence that it too had rallied temporarily to the Gaullist cause, though any contacts that had taken place to this end appear to have occurred via the *pied-noir* and veterans' associations that Delbecq had infiltrated, in which many young, politically active officers were involved.²⁶

The contacts between the military and the Gaullists in Paris might be seen as more important in determining the course of events leading to de Gaulle's return, and in establishing how much compromise took place between the views of each group, once Salan's call for de Gaulle had brought the army and Gaullism together. Before May 13, Debré had reassured General Paul Ely, increasingly concerned about the real danger of a split in the army between the young officers committed to psychological warfare and *Algérie française* and the high command, that de Gaulle now intended to return to power to redress the situation.²⁷ Thus, at a senior level, Gaullist-military contact in the name of the change of regime had already taken place before May 13. Ely, however, was not entirely representative of the highly politicised army in Algeria, as he was already sympathetic to Gaullism, opposed to any overthrow of civilian power, and concerned with the wider question of France's

²⁴ J. Charlot, *Le gaullisme d'opposition 1946-1958* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 347-8; Salan, pp. 315-8

²⁵ B. Ullmann, *Jacques Soustelle: le mal aimé* (Paris: Plon, 1995), p. 254

²⁶ The paras did nothing to prevent the 13 May seizing of the Government buildings, but no conclusive evidence exists that they had actually been won over to the Gaullist cause. Colonel Roger Trinquier, commander of the paras on May 13, makes no reference to any Gaullist contacts in his memoirs, but he, like Salan, had become fiercely antigauillist by the time of writing. R. Trinquier, *Le temps perdu* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1978), pp. 277-82

²⁷ Rudelle, pp. 151-2

international alliances as much as with *Algérie française* alone. He also agreed with the Gaullists' view that the essential problem in Algeria was Soviet aid to the ALN, via Egypt.²⁸ On May 17, the first meeting took place between General Beaufort, charged with co-ordinating the Operation Resurrection in Paris, and Michel Debré. While this demonstrates that from this date, senior Gaullists were well aware of the military plans – Beaufort told Debré that the Gaullists would have the final decision as to when to launch 'Resurrection' – the fact that Debré and Beaufort had not met sooner suggests that this particular Gaullist-military conspiracy was a new development in May 1958.

Most Gaullist-military contacts in Paris took place towards the end of May 1958, during the preparation of the 'Resurrection' operation. In metropolitan France, the operation's success depended upon the co-operation of General Roger Miquel, who commanded the *Cinquième Région Militaire* in south-west France. Miquel, as has already been seen, had previously worked closely with Pierre Koenig to undermine liberal policies in Morocco (see pp. 144-5), though he cannot be described as a Gaullist. He was, however, involved in the local *Association Nationale des Français d'Afrique du Nord*, which was, by April 1958, threatening to stage demonstrations in Paris in support of *Algérie française*.²⁹ Direct Gaullist-military contacts are ambiguous. Accounts range from that of Commander Vitasse, sent from Algiers to prepare the ground in Paris for 'Resurrection', and who claims that Foccart and Pierre Lefranc gave complete approval to the plan, to Foccart's report of the same meeting, which insists that the Gaullists only ever approved the principle of military pressure in the background to ensure that parliament would give way to de Gaulle.³⁰

²⁸ P. Ely, *Mémoires*, Vol. 2: *Suez ... le 13 mai* (Paris: Plon, 1969), pp. 264-5; Debré, pp. 297-8

²⁹ The south-west region had a high concentration of former North African settlers by the late 1950s, following immigration from the protectorates and Algeria. J.P. Buffelan, *Le complot du 13 mai dans le sud-ouest*, (Paris: LGDJ, 1966), pp. 34-54

³⁰ Nick, pp. 591-3 & 757-809; Gaillard, p. 142. Nick reprints Vitasse's original report on the 'Resurrection' operation, which does include the phrase 'accord complet' to describe Foccart and Lefranc's reaction to his proposals.

De Gaulle is generally acknowledged to have been reluctant to approve 'Resurrection'. For de Gaulle to come to power as head of a military insurrection would deprive him of his status as national arbiter, lose him international support, and possibly lead to internal conflict in France resulting from resistance by the Left. The relationship between de Gaulle and the Gaullists in relation to 'Resurrection', however, is less clear, with some Gaullists apparently as keen as the army for the operation to take place. De Gaulle hoped that the threat of military action would suffice to persuade parliament to accept him as Prime Minister, and insisted that the decision-making authority for 'Resurrection' should rest not, as seemed to be the case, with Michel Debré, but with Salan – the Gaullists would thus be free of blame if 'Resurrection' were to fail.³¹ To this end, de Gaulle requested that Salan send his representative, General Dulac, to explain the plan to him. This gave rise to the report that de Gaulle instructed Dulac to 'faites le nécessaire' in the eventuality that de Gaulle failed to win over the National Assembly.³²

Some Gaullists took a more active part in the preparation of 'Resurrection'. After persuading Arrighi of the benefits of a Gaullist-military seizure of power in Corsica,³³ Soustelle envisaged participating in the military operations in Paris. Nonetheless, he too acknowledged that this could only be seen as a last resort if de Gaulle were not invested in parliament. Soustelle and Salan were to be in the second wave of forces entering Paris, behind Massu, while the full extent of the plan's unrealistic expectations is seen in Soustelle's proposal that Massu and President Coty should go to Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises by helicopter and bring de Gaulle to Paris.³⁴ Soustelle may have been encouraged by Dulac's report that de Gaulle had promised that his policy towards Algeria would be integration,³⁵ though it seems unlikely that de Gaulle actually made such a promise. Trinquier's earlier request for

³¹ Ferniot, pp. 508-9; Gaillard, p. 142

³² Ferniot, pp. 509-10; Tournoux, p. 293

³³ Ullmann, p. 255

³⁴ Ferniot, pp. 451-2; Ullmann, p. 255

³⁵ Ferniot, pp. 509-10

clarification of de Gaulle's views on Algeria had met with silence and it was left to Massu to assure Trinquier that the General was committed to integration, demonstrating how the views of Soustelle had come to represent Gaullism in Algeria.³⁶ Like Soustelle, Jacques Dauer also expected that the proposed Gaullist-military alliance would come to fruition. He organised a number of volunteers from youth and student Gaullist movements to support the airborne troops upon landing in France, while Gaullists were instrumental in the creation of Committees of Public Safety in eighty towns, ready to reveal themselves at the time of 'Resurrection'.³⁷

Despite all the preparations and contacts outlined above, the joint Gaullist-military planning was never put into operation. It would be wrong, though, to see 'Resurrection' as merely an empty threat, devised by the Gaullists to secure de Gaulle's return and manipulating the army's activism. In order to return to power as Prime Minister, de Gaulle had to persuade the National Assembly, the Presidents of the two houses of parliament, and President Coty, of his ability to form a legitimate republican government. The approval of the socialist group, in particular, was crucial to ensure that de Gaulle won a majority in parliament for his investiture. On May 28, de Gaulle's path to government seemed to be blocked by the refusal of the socialist President of the National Assembly, André Le Troquer, to allow the General to govern with full powers. With de Gaulle's return seeming uncertain, the army in Algiers decided to proceed with 'Resurrection', which had been put on hold during de Gaulle's talks with politicians in Paris. If the military operation was seen as a last resort, in the event of de Gaulle's failure, then the state of disillusion among de Gaulle's entourage on May 29 must explain this change of policy in Algiers. However, the only evidence of any Gaullist involvement in this process is the fact that Dauer was prepared to implement his part of 'Resurrection' on May 30. President Coty's appeal to de Gaulle on May 29 prevented 'Resurrection' from

³⁶ Ferniot, pp. 456-7

³⁷ Williams, p. 155; Ferniot, pp. 453-4

taking place. It would be inaccurate to describe the Gaullists as disappointed that the military operation had not been necessary, but the enthusiasm shown by some Gaullists, such as Dauer, demonstrates that this last resort had not been entirely unpalatable to all Gaullists. Among the army, many were frustrated that their moment of glory had been denied them, possibly preparing the way for the officers' rapid disillusionment with de Gaulle's Algerian policy and their feelings of being used and betrayed by the Gaullists.³⁸

It must be noted that not all Gaullists were working according to the assumption that 'Resurrection' would be necessary. Edmond Michelet, for example, took part in talks with *Algérie française* activists, members of other political parties and Pflimlin, aimed at finding a form of presidential appeal to de Gaulle that would be acceptable to the activists in Algiers and the parliament in Paris, to prevent the military operation from taking place.³⁹ Foccart, too, despite his conspiratorial reputation, acted as intermediary between the Gaullist camp and the President of the Senate, Monnerville, in preparation of the meeting between de Gaulle, le Troquer and Monnerville on the night of May 28. The Gaullists, therefore, did show some commitment to the principle of de Gaulle's return being accomplished according to regular constitutional procedures. Indeed, those Gaullists who showed most interest in 'Resurrection' were Dauer, at the head of an assortment of youth and student activist groups, and Soustelle, increasingly immersed in the political life of Algiers rather than Paris. De Gaulle might even be said to have achieved a kind of reconciliation with the 'system' that the Gaullists had been denouncing for years, by insisting on reaching agreement with former enemies like Mollet and Auriol in order to return to power as the representative of the Nation rather than as a representative of a particular group.

³⁸ Foccart describes the hostility he encountered, in June 1958, from sections of the army that had been due to participate in 'Resurrection'. Gaillard, pp. 142-3

³⁹ Ferniot, pp. 513-4

The splits within Gaullism that were to emerge over Algeria might, therefore, be seen as emanating from the events surrounding de Gaulle's return, especially as far as relations between de Gaulle and Soustelle are concerned; outlining his plans for government to Auriol on May 30, de Gaulle announced that he intended to appoint a minister for Algeria, and that: 'Il ne sera en aucun cas Jacques Soustelle'.⁴⁰ Algeria was the issue that undermined Gaullist unity in the early years of the Fifth Republic, though the question of Algerian policy was generally absent from de Gaulle's return; very few original statements on the subject emerged in May 1958. Integration was generally adopted as the doctrine in whose name the revolt in Algiers would take place. Despite the doubts expressed by some Gaullists in 1956-8, as seen in chapter 8, it was the preferred option of the *pieds-noirs* and the army, and of Soustelle, who was the Gaullists' chief asset in Algiers, and therefore was never contradicted by Gaullists during the three weeks of crisis. Indeed, shortly before the revolt in Algiers, Soustelle wrote that there was no need for Gaullists to further clarify their ideas or to further explain the situation in Algiers; everything was sufficiently clear and all that was required was a show of determination, presumably from the government though this is not explicitly stated.⁴¹ By the end of May 1958, Foccart was able to conclude that the events had shown both the *pieds-noirs*' and the Muslims' approval for integration, as seen by the welcome received by Soustelle in Algeria, and there could now be no question of implementing any other policy in Algeria.⁴²

In addition to their public support for integration in May 1958, the Gaullists also focused on the theme already developed by Debré since 1957, presenting de Gaulle as a national arbiter and the only possible solution to the Algerian crisis. Frey thus defended de Gaulle's silence during the government crisis and the calls for his return, arguing that the General could only return to public life as a force above politics, answering the call of the Nation as a whole:

⁴⁰ V. Auriol, quoted in Ferniot, p. 530

⁴¹ Soustelle, 'Pour sauver l'Algérie, il faut d'abord le vouloir', *Voici Pourquoi*, 11 (8.5.1958)

⁴² *Lettre à l'Union Française*, 430 (29.5.1958)

Le Général de Gaulle ne saurait se départir d'un silence qui constitue sa principale force parce qu'il est la condition même de sa liberté. Dès lors qu'il exposerait son point de vue sur les grands problèmes nationaux une coalition d'intérêts se hâterait d'exploiter ses paroles, de les déformer, de les traduire à son profit en actes partiels. Il est certain que la pensée du Général de Gaulle, tant qu'il ne pourra lui-même la faire passer dans les faits, court le risque de servir d'alibi aux uns ou aux autres et de couvrir des calculs contradictoires.⁴³

Debré added that de Gaulle had to remain above politics and the various plots and revolts because the General represented legitimacy, national independence and the revival of the State.⁴⁴ Given the complete absence of civil authority in Algiers and the collapse of government in Paris, the appeal of the State's restoration in May 1958 was clear. National independence implied, above all, resisting American pressure to withdraw from Algeria: the American cultural centre had been one of the casualties of the revolt in Algiers, and in Paris rumours were circulating that the United States were hostile to de Gaulle's return.⁴⁵ The question of legitimacy is more ambiguous, given that much of the army in Algeria considered itself to be in a state of legitimate revolt along with the Gaullists, while de Gaulle had to be presented to the Nation as the beneficiary of a legitimate process of transfer of power, not as the figurehead of a military revolt. Debré, however, remained focused throughout May 1958 on the situation in Paris, where for the sake of national unity it was vital that de Gaulle's return to power appeared legitimate and republican.

In May 1958, the Gaullists avoided making any specific commitments on Algeria – other than *Algérie française* or integration – and kept the issue of de Gaulle's actual intentions out of public debate. Reference to the General took the form of appeals to

⁴³ *Les Idées ... Les Faits*, 32 (9.5.1958)

⁴⁴ *Courrier de la Colère*, 27 (22.5.1958) & 28 (30.5.1958)

⁴⁵ The United States, in fact, welcomed de Gaulle's return as it ensured stability in France and prevented civil war or a communist take-over. I.M. Wall, *France, the United States and the Algerian War* (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 151-6, 'The United States, Algeria, and the Fall of the Fourth French Republic', *Diplomatic History*, 8 (1994), pp. 498-511 & 'Les relations franco-américaines et la Guerre d'Algérie 1956-1960', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, 110 (1996), pp. 63-89; M. Connelly, 'The French-American Conflict over North Africa and the Fall of the Fourth Republic', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, 84 (1997), pp. 9-27

a national arbiter above the parties, or a historic saviour who could prevent military coup, communist take-over or civil war. This strategy can be explained by the fact that the Gaullists, by May 1958, saw de Gaulle's return as a means to achieving certain goals, rather than as an end in itself. Many of those whose support they enlisted – such as those in the army who rallied to Gaullism in May 1958 – appear to have focused purely on securing the General's return, believing that his presence at the head of the government would allow the army greater freedom of action in Algeria. The *pieds-noirs*, too, traditionally sceptical of politics, appear to have accepted the assurances they received from Gaullists like Delbecq and Soustelle, that de Gaulle meant order, stability and *Algérie française*. As has been seen, however, the Gaullism that triumphed in May 1958 was already in a state of uncertainty, reflection and change regarding Algerian policy, and it already contained the origins of the splits that occurred between May 1958 and Algerian independence in July 1962.

CONCLUSION

Although studies of Gaullism tend to focus on the personal contribution of de Gaulle himself, the subject of the present study does not lend itself easily to such an approach. De Gaulle remained silent on North African questions between 1955 and May 1958, and even then he gave no clear indication of his North African policies upon his return to power. Yet the events of May 1958 would have been unimaginable without the Algerian crisis, and the Gaullists' success in turning them to their advantage could not have happened if a coherent 'Gaullist' position on the crisis in North Africa had not existed. In conclusion, therefore, it is possible to identify the dominant features of Gaullist thinking on North Africa and its relationship to France at the time of de Gaulle's return to power. That de Gaulle, during the first four years of his presidency, did not always adhere strictly to the positions already defended by Gaullists does not undermine the conviction with which those views were held; the General antagonised and disappointed many of his own supporters by moving gradually towards Algerian independence. Thus, the present study of the Gaullists and North Africa during the second half of the Fourth Republic can be seen as a contribution to the study of the internal debate and divisions within Gaullism, by demonstrating that the Gaullist movement did far more than simply echo de Gaulle's pronouncements and that, when left to their own devices by a long period of exile from power and by the silence of de Gaulle, Gaullist politicians, thinkers and activists were more than capable of sustaining debate on the most pressing question facing France: the crisis in North Africa.

A number of themes emerge from this study of Gaullist attitudes to French North Africa. Upon the outbreak of widespread nationalist protest in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Gaullists remained convinced that nationalism was only a minority movement, generated by foreign interference in French affairs. Their first reaction was therefore to regard nationalism as a problem that could be addressed through

French foreign policy, by demonstrating the degree of foreign ‘interference’ in North Africa and denouncing the foreign agents involved, notably Egypt, the Soviet Union and the United States. In this response to this perceived foreign-led nationalism, the Gaullists adopted the concept of the *Union française* as a symbol of commitment to its colonial mission in North Africa, even though this constitutional framework had excluded Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia when it was devised at the end of the Second World War. To adopt a different course – for example, loosening the ties between France and North Africa – was now seen as a betrayal of loyal populations. In Morocco and Tunisia, therefore, the only constitutional changes that could be accepted were those that devolved some power to the Moroccans – in accordance with the spirit of protectorate – but left it in the hands of a reliable, pro-French elite, preferably the protectorates’ sovereigns rather than their politicians. In Algeria, an integral part of France, no change in status was envisaged at all. Only measures to secure the Algerians’ ‘evolution’ were deemed acceptable. Algeria was therefore somewhat sidelined by the Gaullists between the 1951 elections and the outbreak of the rebellion in November 1954. Consequently, they saw the rebellion not as a local phenomenon but rather as the culmination of a crisis that had been developing through Indochinese independence and devolution of power to Morocco and Tunisia, and became all the more determined to prevent any further French concessions.

By 1954, most of the factors that were to dominate Gaullist policy on North Africa had become apparent through the Gaullists’ reactions to the problems in Morocco and Tunisia: resistance to internationalisation, refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the principle of self-determination, attacks on government for both *immobilisme* and inconsistency, warnings of the consequences of losing North Africa, and reminders of the continuing importance of the French civilising mission. These same themes merged with the Gaullists’ more general views on France’s international status and priorities in the debate over the European Defence Community between 1952 and 1954. The Gaullists, from the end of this debate until 1958, focused on a

perceived choice between closer relations with Europe and safeguarding French North Africa. Moreover, the defence of North Africa, after the EDC debate, increasingly came to be presented as fulfilling the same function as European defence co-operation: defending the Western World as a whole against communism. In response to their new prioritisation of defence of North Africa, the Gaullists won support in military circles as many officers, after the loss of Indochina, began to see Arab nationalism as a Trojan horse for Soviet communism. By the end of 1954 the Gaullists were committed to spending the final four years of the Fourth Republic arguing that France's very survival, and the welfare of the Western world, depended upon there being no further distractions from the effort to restore France's world role through prioritising its campaign in North Africa.

Given the priority accorded to North Africa, the Gaullists' existing policy of opposition to any government of the Fourth Republic 'system' became closely linked with governments' policies on Algeria and the protectorates. Only the Mendès-France government of 1954-55 won any Gaullist approval in this respect, and once this administration fell in February 1955, leaving unresolved problems in Morocco and Tunisia and war in Algeria, the Gaullists became convinced that only a change of regime could deal adequately with the crisis in North Africa. A theme of impending crisis emerged at this stage and dominated the final years of the Fourth Republic. As Gaullists became more intransigent in their defence of North Africa and opposition to the 'system', divisions in Gaullist ranks appeared, with any Gaullist supporting liberal policies in North Africa or advocating participation in government generally becoming isolated from the mainstream Gaullist movement.

As the Gaullist movement lost some of its unity following the demise of the RPF, individuals became more influential. Jacques Soustelle and Michel Debré, in particular, shaped Gaullist attitudes to the Algerian War and to the Fourth Republic, between 1955 and 1958. Soustelle developed the concept of integration during his

spell as Governor-General in Algeria, thereby creating the ideology in whose name the Algerian settlers and the army were to be rallied to the Gaullist cause in 1958. Integration also sowed the seeds of future discord, as Soustelle had offered the settlers, the army and many Gaullists hope that Algeria would never be 'abandoned' by France. The Gaullist splits and civil-military conflicts of the early Fifth Republic can thus be seen to have their origins in Soustelle's rise to prominence as the intellectual leader of the Gaullists on Algeria affairs from 1955, a rise that itself owed much to the silence of other Gaullists and de Gaulle himself on specific questions of policy towards North Africa. Soustelle committed the Gaullists to a defence and intensification of the military effort in Algeria and thus contributed to the coming-together of the Gaullist and military causes before 1958. He also developed the idea of intensive economic and political commitment to Algeria, further enhancing Algeria's status in Gaullist thinking as an issue that must become the Nation's primary priority as the consequences of its loss would be catastrophic. This, in turn, meant that the Fourth Republic and its governments came to be judged by the Gaullists on the basis of their commitment to Algeria. Any signs that this commitment was in doubt were interpreted as evidence that a change of regime was needed to restore the Nation's sense of purpose and commitment, as symbolised by the grand scheme of integration and development that Soustelle outlined for Algeria.

Following on from Soustelle's argument about the paramount importance of French Algeria, Michel Debré linked Gaullism with the growing sense of crisis associated with the war in Algeria. Debré thus allowed the Gaullists to take advantage of the damage that the war caused to public confidence in Fourth Republic governments, through his denunciation of their lack of commitment and submission to foreign pressure. His activities in 1957-8 also contributed greatly to Gaullism's reputation, at the beginning of the Fifth Republic, as a force in favour of the status quo in Algeria and hostile to proposals for international co-operation in matters that were perceived as being essential to the French national interest. Unlike Soustelle, Debré's

worldview as expressed towards the end of the Fourth Republic found its way into much of Fifth Republic Gaullism, in areas such as de Gaulle's mistrust of the Atlantic Alliance and in the Fifth Republic's system of strong central government. Debré, however, had in common with Soustelle the fact that de Gaulle's concern for national *redressement* in general required him ultimately to choose between distancing himself from Gaullism or abandoning his very real commitment to *Algérie française*. The divisions that already existed in Fourth Republic Gaullism but were masked somewhat by the crisis in North Africa in 1957-58 are evidenced by the fact that Soustelle's commitment to Algeria led him into open rebellion against de Gaulle, while Debré's fidelity to de Gaulle revealed his defence of North Africa during the 1950s to have been essentially a central part of a greater concern for national greatness and freedom of action.

Many of the themes of Fifth Republic Gaullism can be seen to emerge in the Gaullist movement's debates on colonial problems in North Africa during the Fourth Republic. These include suspicion of the Atlantic Alliance, a desire for national unity under a strong State, and an interest in developing and maintaining a network of 'friendly' states in the former French Empire, designed to ensure France's continued prominence and influence in international affairs to counteract the power of the superpowers. More generally, the study of Gaullism, also, is advanced by a study of the Gaullists' response to North African problems. Many of the somewhat vague and general notions of what constituted Gaullism, dating from the Second World War and the liberation era, were more closely defined in response to a crisis that raised issues of *grandeur*, independence and unity, all of which had previously featured prominently in Gaullist discourse as general principles without having been the subject of detailed debate in a specific context. In addition, de Gaulle's absence from many of the debates of the 1950s on North Africa meant that the debates that took place among leading Gaullists, in the General's absence, contributed greatly to the development of Gaullism as a force that was able to organise and present a series of

positions and principles in the manner of regular political forces in the Fifth Republic, in contrast to the Fourth Republic attempt to create an organisation - the RPF - that was chiefly concerned with avoiding conventional forms of political and parliamentary expression. Having created a new parliamentary system and developed a set of positions on French and international affairs, the Gaullists' debates of 1951-58 allowed them to emerge as a relatively coherent political force after 1958.

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